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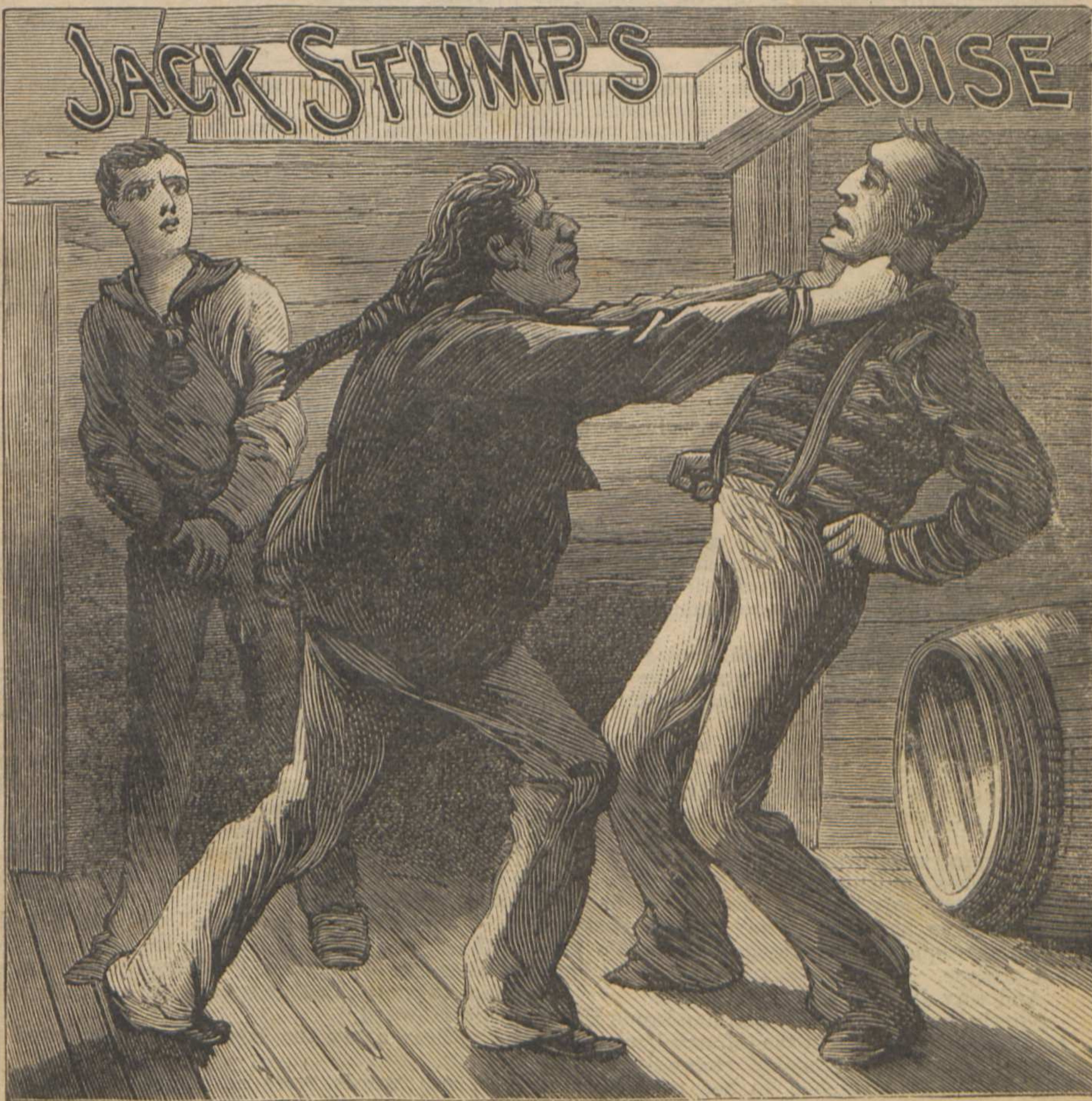
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"THE KEYS—THE KEYS!" MUTTERED STUMP, SHAKING HIM VIOLENTLY, "IT'S THE KEYS I WANT—
D'YE HEAR?"

Jack Stump's Cruise ;

OR,

The Montpelier's Mutineers.

A Story of the Whaling Grounds.

BY ROGER STARBUCK,
AUTHOR OF "THE BOY CAPTAIN," "THE BLACK
SCHOONER," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE GOLDEN HARPOON.

ON the morning of the 25th day of April, 18—, the whale-ship Montpelier, of New London, anchored in one of the many bays that open along the coast of Kamschatka, where it is washed by the waters of the Sea of Ochotsk.

As soon as everything was made snug aloft and aloft, the skipper rubbed his hands with complacency, and a satisfied expression was seen to cross even the face of Mr. Briggs, the first mate, who was the ship's grumbler.

"Good quarters," remarked the captain.

"Ay, ay, sir!" responded Briggs, "the tide is easy here, and I don't think a gale would hurt us much—we are so shut in by the cliffs. But," he suddenly added, turning his glance toward a large field of ice about a league from the shore, "I don't like the looks of yonder floe. It may come upon us and give us a jam."

"It will drift past us," replied the captain.

"I am not so sure of *that*!" said the mate, as he snatched a glass from the mizzen fife-rail, and directed it toward the ice. "Them under-currents up this way sometimes plays the very smash. But if I ain't much mistaken, I see a bear moving along the floe."

As he spoke, he passed the glass to his companion, who immediately lifted it to his eye.

"Do you see the animal, captain?"

"Ay, ay, there it is, sure enough; a *brown* bear, I believe."

"Uncle!" exclaimed a gentle voice at this instant, and a light hand fell upon the captain's shoulder. "How wild! how picturesque! What place is this?"

The speaker was a girl of seventeen, with large brown eyes, a *petite* but well-rounded figure, and a countenance truly lovely in its purity and expression. From her neck, by a strip of blue ribbon, was suspended a golden harpoon of delicate workmanship, and about four inches in length. It was the gift of the captain—her only living relative—who had presented it to her on the day that he complied with her request to accompany him on his present voyage.

And why did she wish to go to sea?

Firstly, because the bold and handsome Harry Marline had shipped in the Montpelier as boat-steerer and harpooner's aid. Secondly, because she was much attached to her relative, who, having no children of his own, always had treated his niece with the indulgent fondness of a father.

You might have known this had you seen the smile that crossed his face as he turned and gazed with admiration upon the crimsoned cheek, and expressive eyes of the young girl.

"Good-morning, Alice," he said. "I am glad to see you stirring so early. How did you pass the night?"

"Very well, thank you," she replied, raising herself upon the tips of her toes, and presenting her lips for a kiss, which was immediately granted. "Very well, indeed; but you have not answered my question. What place is this?"

"It has no particular name that I ever heard of," replied the captain. "But, you have been long enough at sea, now, Alice, to perceive that I've chosen a good place for an anchorage—"

"If it wasn't for the ice," interrupted Briggs.

"An excellent place," continued the captain, paying no attention to the words of his companion, "a position well sheltered, where the craft can lie while we fill her with oil—secure from every danger—"

"Except that of ice," doggedly persisted the mate.

"Secure from *every* danger," repeated the captain, turning sharply toward the first officer.

"Oh! I am so glad!" cried Alice, clapping her white hands with an enthusiasm natural to a girl of seventeen. "It is such a wild, beautiful place. And, on pleasant days, I can bring my sewing on deck. It will be very nice sitting here and looking up now and then at those great towering cliffs that rise so far above the tops of our mast-heads."

"Until the ice comes," said Briggs.

"Why, Mr. Briggs, what do you mean?" said Alice, turning toward the first officer with an expression of alarm upon her face; "this is the third time I've heard you speak about the ice. Is there really danger to be apprehended from it?"

"Ay, ay, Miss Alice, plenty of it," bluntly responded the mate; "and unless—"

"You must not mind him, niece," interrupted the captain. "He fancies there is danger from that floe that you see off the quarter; but, you may believe me when I tell you that it will have drifted past us before night."

"I'm poor at figgers myself," persisted Briggs, "but I can calculate almost to the minute when that ice-floe, which is now about a league from us, will be upon us, jamming our timbers."

"It will never reach us," replied the captain, in a decided voice; "you can even perceive that it is moving north'ard now, and—"

He paused suddenly, and turned his gaze toward the ice, upon which the eyes of the mate had suddenly seemed fixed with steady intensity.

"Ay, there it is again," shouted the first officer, as a column of vapor shot upward from the center of the floe. "There blows!—there—there blows! The ice is alive with whales, Captain Howard."

"Clear away the boats there!" shouted the latter.

These words were addressed to the sailors lounging about the windlass, some of them smoking, and others engaged in patching thread-bare coats and jackets.

"Lively—lively, men!" yelled the captain. "Call all hands!"

This command was promptly obeyed, and a dozen men who had been lying asleep upon chests in the forecastle came bounding through the open scuttle.

By this time the decks of the Montpelier presented a scene of bustle and excitement, such as always takes place on board a vessel of her class when whales have been sighted, and preparations are being made to lower away.

In the midst of the uproar stood Alice Howard, watching with dilating eyes and blushing cheeks the movements of Harry Marline, who belonged to the mate's boat, and who, more than once, while arranging his irons, contrived to direct a quick but smiling glance toward the spot where she stood. She had been so long an inmate of her uncle's vessel that, but for the presence of her lover, the scene passing before her eyes would have excited but little interest in her bosom.

At last, however, the necessary preparations were completed, and the captain then gave the order to lower away. As the four boats dropped simultaneously into the water, he advanced to the side of his niece and grasped her hand.

"Good-by, Alice. When we return I hope we will bring whales alongside. Take good care of yourself while I am absent. Good-by!" and with a parting kiss, the captain sprung into his boat and issued the command to "give way!"

The light vessels darted with arrowy swiftness from the ship's side, and a moment afterward the bow of each was heading for the floes.

Alice then ran to the bulwarks, and stood watching the boats with a vague feeling of uneasiness that she had never before experienced.

The four boats continued to recede rapidly from the ship, and presently the young girl perceived that they were upon the outer edge of the ice-field. A few minutes later their crews had worked them so far among the bergs that they were out of sight.

Alice was then on the point of moving in the direction of the companionway when she felt a hand upon her arm. Turning, she beheld a face and figure, the singular appearance of which we shall at once describe.

The face, which was that of a man about forty years of age, was very large and square, with enormous ears, round, twinkling blue eyes, a flat nose, and a pair of lips that kept moving from side to side, producing a ludicrous effect upon the whole countenance. An old-fashioned pigtail, carefully tied near its extremity, and well greased with whale oil, hung from the back of the head, keeping time with the movements of the wearer, and giving to the huge glazed sou'wester that crowned his skull the appearance of a very unnatural animal, with a black shell and a long tail. Passing on, we come to the figure, which was not unlike that of a cask, while the arms were of enormous length. The legs, on the contrary, were very short. The dress of this person, besides the sou'wester alluded to, consisted of a Guernsey frock, profusely ornamented with patches of different sizes and hues, and pants of canvas-duck, very

coarse, but scrupulously clean, with the bottoms flowing loosely around a pair of neat, well-fitting pumps.

"Good-morning, John Stump," said Alice, as the sailor lifted his sou'wester and bowed, scraping his right foot as he did so.

"Jack Stump, if it please your pretty lips, miss—for I always feel as though I was turned wrong side out when anybody calls me John. Jack's the name that I've always gone by, ever since I was as big as a turtle."

"Oh, very well—Jack Stump it shall be, then. You have something particular to say to me, Jack," she added, as the seaman suddenly placed his forefingers upon the side of his flat nose, while his great blue eyes began to roll in his head.

"Ay, ay," he said, at last, in a low voice, "I've been a-trying to get out, what I wanted to say to you, sweet lass, but your beauty choked the words in my throat, as a stick of candy put in the mouth of a baby stops its squalling. Such beauty as yours, miss—"

"That will do, Jack," interrupted Alice, with a gratified smile, "that will do, and I am much obliged to you. But you have aroused my curiosity, and I would thank you to come to the point at once."

"Here it goes, then," said Stump, speaking in a voice of mysterious confidence, "here it goes, sure enough, which is, that I'm a friend to you and the captain, and I wish that everybody in the ship was the same."

"Why! how is this, Jack? My father's crew are all friendly to us, are they not?"

"Good grub!" said Stump, in a deep voice, "is the first consideration of a whaler. Good officers the second, and good luck the third. Them are the three things that win men's hearts—they are the things that have won mine. But there are some beings that has the shape of men, and yet they ain't men for all that;—amphibious animals like, that has more of the shark than human natur' in their corporosities, and believe me, Miss Alice, there are such creature's in this bark. Just turn your pretty eyes forward, young lady—sly like, as you women knows so well how to do—and look at them five blue-skinned devils standin' there by the windlass. D'ye see 'em?"

"I do," replied Alice. "Four New Zealanders and the Portuguese steward; but what of that?"

Stump seized the end of his pigtail with his left fingers, and bringing it over his left shoulder, placed his right hand upon it.

"It's an honest pigtail—Miss Howard, and I always swear by it on occasions of this kind, when a Bible isn't handy. And now," he added, in a solemn voice, "here goes my oath, which is that them fellows forward are a-plotting and hatching to do harm—though what harm exactly I can't tell."

"Why, Jack! how you talk. What ground can you have for these strange suspicions? My father, with all his officers and the greater part of the crew, away, too," added the young girl, with a shudder.

"Ay, ay," responded the shipkeeper, allowing his pigtail to drop to its original position, "and that's why we must be on our guard,

Them devils forward were all laid up with the rheumatiz a while ago, so that they couldn't go in the boats, and now look at 'em a-standin' up as well and hearty as you and I. That's suspicious to begin with. Then again, I overheard one of 'em talking about fencing that quarrelsome mutineer, Tom Lark, who, you know, the skipper put in irons a week ago—because he refused duty—and shut up in the run. They said something about his understanding navigation; and I couldn't hear any more because they saw that I was near them a-listening and they closed their mouths all of a sudden."

"What shall we do? What *can* we do?" cried Alice, in considerable alarm.

"That's a hard question to answer, seeing as I'm all alone without any man to help me. But you may be sart'in that Jack Stump will stick to you and do what he can. You had better go below now, and lock the door of your room while I dodge around and find out something about the plans of the rascals. Of one thing, hows'ever, you may be assured, and it is that the plotters can't do anything just now, seeing as the wind has gone down and there isn't a breath of air stirring, and—ay, ay, Miss Alice, a beautiful morning!" he suddenly added, in a louder tone. "I've sailed the sea in every kind of a craft for thirty years, and never knew a finer mornin' than this! What do you think of that?"

Alice opened her blue eyes upon the speaker, surprised at this abrupt change in the thread of his discourse. But in a few moments she understood the cause, for a light footstep suddenly saluted her ear, and she divined that a third person had passed behind them and taken his position near the rail, not far from the spot they occupied. With woman's ready tact, she refrained from turning her head.

"I am surprised to hear you say so. The weather is not as a general thing very clear in the Ochotsk sea, I believe."

"Not a bit of it, Miss Alice. There ain't many heavy gales here at this season of the year, it's true, but there's plenty of fogs," added Jack. "Just give a sly look at that blue devil, will you—a-listening with all his ears," continued the speaker, partially turning his head under the pretense of shaking his pigtail.

Alice moved closer to the rail, and directing her glances toward the water, contrived to obtain a good view from beneath the corners of her eyes of the individual who stood upon the other side of her.

He was a tall New Zealander, with a sinewy face, high cheek-bones, and that peculiarly fierce eagle gleam of the eye, natural to the people of his race. There was a ring in each ear, another hanging pendent from his nostrils, and his countenance was disfigured in many places by "tattoo" marks of yellow and blue. On the present occasion his thin lips wore a peculiarly sinister expression, that excited much uneasiness in the bosom of Alice, notwithstanding that she had been accustomed during the voyage to see the wild natives of the Pacific shores.

"Do you see anything of the boats, Driko?" inquired Stump, quitting his original position

and placing himself between Alice and the native.

"De boat me no see. Dey too far in 'e ice. No come back to bark nebber more."

"And why not, I'd like to know. You must not make such a foolish speech as that again, 'Blueskin.' You frighten Miss Howard!" and seizing his pigtail, he gave the savage a light blow across the nose with it as he spoke.

"Takee care!" gritted the native, starting upright with glittering eyes and placing a hand upon his sheath-knife, "takee care, you Stump. No strike me too much with 'piggle-tail,' or me makee you Stump no more."

"And boil me afterward in the try-pot, I suppose, seein' as that's one of your 'pow-wow' customs!"

"Hi! hi! hi!" gritted the New Zealander, while a malicious smile flashed across his dark face. "Me like plenty Stump to eat. Good for boil more better dan whale—dis Stump so fat make very much good!"

"Ay, ay, too good for such a lean, ravenous, blue-skinned rascal as you are, to digest. But how about those boats? Why do you think they'll never come back?"

"Nebber come back to bark—no nebber more!" exclaimed the savage, with a sinister laugh; and turning upon his heel, with the air of one not caring to be questioned further, he made his way to the forward part of the vessel and joined his four shipmates.

"You had better go below, Alice," said Stump, "and that will look as though you don't suspect that anything is wrong. Trust to me to ferret out the rascals' plans."

Alice obeyed and descended into the cabin.

CHAPTER II.

THE RESULT.

As Stump rolled on, he turned his glances seaward, and perceived that a light breeze from the northwest was beginning to wrinkle the surface of the water. He glanced uneasily toward his dusky shipmates and saw a momentary gleam of exultation flash across their dark features, as they were turned in the direction of the ripples gradually spreading over the bosom of the ocean.

Driko stood a little apart from the rest of his shipmates, and Stump did not fail to notice that the eyes of this savage were now directed significantly aloft, as though he felt impatient to loosen the topsail.

The watchful seaman felt that he could no longer entertain a doubt in regard to the intentions of the conspirators, and gliding behind the try-works, he seated himself upon the cooper's bench, in the hope that a few moments' reflection might suggest to him some plan that would enable him to defeat their schemes. But scarcely had he begun to reflect, when, chancing to turn his eyes in the direction of the maintop, his glances alighted upon a roll of red bunting that had been carefully placed in that quarter. It was the recall signal, which was used as a summons to the boats to return when they were absent from the vessel, and it was deemed expedient that they should come back. On every such occasion, the bunting was hoisted

to the main truck by means of the signal halliards, which were always kept rove for that purpose. Stump sprung from the bench, mentally pronouncing himself a fool, because the idea suggested by the sight of the red cloth had not occurred to him before. The boats he thought could not by this time be so far from the vessel that their occupants would not perceive the signal when he should have hoisted it to its proper position; but feeling conscious that there was no time to lose, he began at once to waddle toward the main rigging as fast as the bulky proportions of his body would permit.

Not until he had gained the seventh ratlin in the shrouds, did he venture to direct a glance toward the spot where he had last seen his five shipmates, and he then gave his lips a satisfactory twist toward his right ear, for the men were engaged in earnest conversation, and the face of each of them was turned from him. He continued his way as speedily as he could, and presently succeeded in passing the futtock shrouds and in drawing himself into the top. Seizing the bunting, he at once proceeded to unroll it, and a few moments afterward it might have been seen dancing merrily aloft, as he pulled upon the slender halliards. The breeze, which by this time had freshened considerably, rustled among the folds of the cloth as it ascended, and when it had reached its proper position, its broad red surface streamed out from the mast in a manner that elicited a sigh of the most intense satisfaction from the lips of Stump.

At this moment a yell of surprise and rage broke upon the ears of the speaker, and turning his head, he saw Driko directing the attention of his companions to the signal at the truck. No sooner was the red bunting perceived by the other four seamen, than the whole number, with curses and ejaculations, rushed into the waist and ordered the shipkeeper to pull down the signal at once.

"Not a bit of it," replied the sturdy seaman, thrusting his hands in his pockets and calmly gazing upon the upturned faces of the conspirators, "not a bit of it. That rag at the truck doesn't come down while I have an arm to keep it where it is. You may make up your minds upon that point."

The men exchanged glances and then held a moment's whispered consultation, after which they rushed simultaneously toward the main shrouds upon the larboard side.

Stump waited very quietly until Driko, the foremost of the party, had swung himself into the rigging, and then drawing a revolver, which, although it was quite rusty, looked very formidable with its six loaded barrels, he pointed it at the head of the astonished New Zealander and ordered him back.

"Ay, ay, blast you!" he added, giving his lips an ominous twist as he spoke. "You see, I'm prepared. I know all about your infarnal plans to take the ship, and if you make another step in this direction, you are a dead pow-wow, that's sartain!"

The Kanaka paused, and after he had ducked his head three or four times, in a vain effort to get it out of the range of the threatening wea-

pon, he looked up with an expression of surprise, which, if not real, was certainly well-feigned.

"Me no understand. You speakee me take ship. Don't know what you mean. No want to take ship—me likee capen too much. De signal me no like to see, because capen he no like to come aboard when he after whale. He make plenty angry when he see de signal!"

"Bosh! you deceitful blueskin; it's all bosh. Just as though I didn't hear you and your chums there a-whispering and plotting to free the mutineer, Tom Lark!"

The dark blood rushed to the faces of those who listened, and they exchanged rapid glances. Driko, however, presently looked up again and replied:

"Hi! hi! You hear we speak about Tom Lark! Why so speak? Because de ice 'e come to jam de ship, and s'posing we bring Tom Lark from de run—Tom Lark good sailor, good navigatem, and he save de ship. Dat's why we speak so much Tom Lark!"

"Bosh again, blast you! For you know that, although I know nothin' of navigation, I'd be as handy in working the ship clear of the ice as Tom Lark."

"Me no believe so," replied Driko, shaking his head. "Navigatem more good as plenty go to sea. But no use me speak to you. You no think me tell truth. Me leaves you. You keep signal at de truck, and when capen come he scold you much."

The islander sprung to the deck and rejoined his shipmates, who had been listening to the foregoing conversation with sullen faces, and with their uneasy glances directed, at intervals of every few moments, toward the red bunting fluttering at the mast-head. The whole party now withdrew to the forward part of the vessel, but presently they changed their position, sitting down close to the try-works, where they were screened from the watchful eyes of the shipkeeper.

He gave his pigtail an impatient jerk, and again directed his glances toward the try-works just in time to witness a spectacle which was certainly a startling proof that the utmost vigilance on his part could not be thrown away in his present position.

Towering above the try-works, with his tall, lithe figure drawn back, and his keen, glistening eyes blazing with a deadly purpose, stood the savage, Driko, holding in his uplifted hands a well-sharpened harpoon, which he was in the act of darting, point foremost, into the corpulent body of Stump.

The latter had so much respect for the wonderful skill of the islander in the use of the barbed weapon with which he was now armed that he drew back, screening himself behind the mast with a celerity which was remarkable in a man of his caliber. The movement, however, was well-timed, for the next moment the deadly iron flew whistling upon its way, and, passing close to the mast, struck the revolver held in his hand with a force that sent the weapon flying from the grasp of its owner into the sea!

A yell of exultation followed, and then the mutineers rushed to the main rigging, and,

leaping into the shrouds, proceeded to mount in the direction of the top, with cat-like agility.

Stump, however, did not lose his self-possession, but, seizing both parts of the signal halliards, he gave them a sudden jerk, that served to unfasten them, and, still contriving to keep them taut, commenced to ascend the topmast rigging, intending to make his way to the topgallant cross-trees, and, when there, keep his adversaries at bay as long as possible by means of his legs and his fists.

He was still in the topmast rigging, when he felt two strong hands pulling the bottom of his pants, in an unceremonious manner, and with a force that made it difficult for him to keep his position. He vainly strove to disengage himself from the vise-like grasp, and while he was still struggling to free himself, he saw Driko, who had crossed from the topmast rigging on the other side, descending toward him, with his long knife between his teeth.

"Go down quick, you, Stump!" gritted the savage, as he seized his knife with his right hand. "Go down, me say, or knife quick cut de windpipe."

"Ay, ay, blast you; you've got me in your toils at last. But it's a deep sea that hasn't any bottom, and you may boil me in one of your pow-wow pots if I don't come out even with you yet!"

Before replying, Driko severed the signal halliards with his knife, and, pulling down the red bunting, rolled it up, and allowed it to drop to the deck.

"Hi, hi, you poor Stump!" he then said; "you think you play me more trick. But me put you, by and by, where you no more make tricks. You see, more soon you like!"

He motioned as he spoke, to the man who still maintained his hold of Stump's pants, and, finding himself released for the present, and resistance useless, the shipkeeper proceeded to descend the rigging, Driko following closely, with his long knife held in readiness for use, in case of opposition.

They had no sooner gained the deck than Stump was surrounded by the five savages, and thrown down.

They fastened his arms behind his back with strong cords; secured his ankles in like manner, and then dropped him into the main hold, like a pig, closing and fastening the hatch above him.

CHAPTER III.

A "STOVE" BOAT.

THE Montpelier's boats, at the moment when Stump succeeded in hoisting the recall signal, were lying motionless in an open space of water, situated near the center of the floe to which we have already alluded. This little lake, of which the surrounding bergs and compact squares of ice formed the shores, was of sufficient size to contain all the boats, and the captain and his mates had expressed much satisfaction because the position afforded them every facility to maneuver their light vessels in case of the appearance of whales in their vicinity. Upright in the stern-sheets, with his steering-oar under his arm, stood each officer, casting keen glances around him in every direction. Nor

were the mates the only watchers, for the young harpooners, conspicuous among whom towered the tall, neatly-dressed figure of Harry Marline, were equally on the alert, piercing the many long, glittering galleries, winding passages, fantastic arches, and caverns among the ice with their penetrating and practiced glances; while, seated close to the gunwales of their boats—each man with his paddle ready for use—the swarthy crews directed their indolent glances toward the reflection of their own faces in the still surface of the waters, or watched the countless numbers of seals that stared upon them with timid eyes from the polished floors of their floating halls.

One of the sailors threw a glance toward the bay where the ship was anchored, and which was so far off that only the three masts of the vessel could be distinguished—and these but faintly—on account of the gray background beyond. But the red signal, flying at the main-truck, did not escape the keen eyes of the spectator, and he at once called the attention of the officer of his boat—Mr. Briggs—to this circumstance.

"Ay, ay, blast you!" replied the irritable Briggs; "you are always fancying that you see the recall signal. If it was a whale, now, I'll wager my pipe that you wouldn't see it."

"You can see it, sir, by turning your head. I am sure I wasn't deceived."

"I wouldn't believe you, though you took your oath upon a stack of Bibles as high as the fore-truck. So, just keep your eyes the other way, and don't let me catch you lookin' after signals again!"

As the man resumed his former position, however, the mate, after having leisurely filled his pipe, and placed it in his mouth, turned and looked toward the bay.

Unfortunately, this happened a second after Driko had pulled down the red bunting and dropped it to the deck. As a natural consequence, Mr. Briggs, after having carefully surveyed the three naked royal masts, came to the conclusion that Bates's imagination had deceived him.

"You thick-skinned lubber!" he muttered, in a low voice, seizing a paddle and lifting it with the intention of breaking it across his informer's skull; "you empty-pated greenhorn, this isn't the first time that—"

"There blows—blows! there blows! A whale right ahead, sir, and two more to windward!" interrupted Harry Marline, addressing the mate in a shrill, penetrating whisper.

Quickly but noiselessly replacing the paddle in the bottom of the boat, the first officer, with his teeth set and his eyes glaring, seized his steering-oar firmly and hissed out his orders to the crew:

"Paddle ahead, every mother's son of you! Spring! spring! my lads—softly, but heartily—spring! It's a bull!"

The men obeyed, and shooting into a narrow passage, about a hundred yards from the mouth of which the first whale, a huge bowhead, was leisurely rolling and spouting, unconscious of the near vicinity of enemies, the mate's boat darted swiftly and almost noiselessly upon its course, followed by the other three boats.

But as the harsh grating of the cedar plank

against the compact masses of ice, among which the rear boats must be directed when their course should be changed, would certainly "gally" (frighten) the leviathan in the passage, the captain made a sign to the second and third officers to stop the exertions of their men for the present.

This silent mandate was obeyed, and the three boats soon became nearly motionless, their officers and crews watching the progress of the mate with breathless interest.

He was nearing the whale with great rapidity and the huge animal, as it rolled leisurely along, with its great barnacled hump rising and dripping in the cool element, still seemed unconscious of the vicinity of foes.

"Stand up, Harry!" whispered Briggs, when the boat was within seven fathoms of the intended prey; and quickly, but noiselessly, springing to his feet, the young harpooner seized his iron, and stood prepared.

The mate now pointed the bow of the boat directly toward the hump of the monster, and then, in a scarcely audible whisper, ordered his men to stop pulling, and take their places upon their thwarts.

This command was readily obeyed, but the light boat still continued to glide on under the impetus which it had received, and, in a few moments, it was within four fathoms of the leviathan.

"Now, then—give it to him!" thundered Briggs.

The barbed weapon flew whistling from the hands of the stout-armed harpooner, with a force that buried it to the socket in the whale's hump. The second iron immediately followed.

"Starn! starn all!" roared the mate, as the startled giant of the deep, writhing with pain, threw his tremendous body toward the boat. "Starn, you beef-eating rascals—starn!"

But the oar-blades, striking against the ice, greatly impeded the motions of the men, and the boat was not yet quite out of the monster's reach, when, lifting his tremendous flukes, he brought them down sideways with a force which would have shattered the forward part of the little craft to atoms had not the watchful Briggs, by a dexterous movement of his steering-oar, caused the bow to swing off to the right.

The little craft, however, did not wholly escape injury, for it received a light tap from the edge of the creature's flukes, which caused the cedar planks to crack in more than one place, and dislodged the bow oarsman from his thwart.

The man was not injured, and he resumed his place, just as the whale disappeared in the green depths of the sea.

Away went the boat with the speed of a whirlwind, the line smoking as it ran around the loggerhead, and the tub oarsman pouring water upon it to prevent it from burning.

The harpooner and the mate now changed places, the latter individual taking his station in the bow, after Marline had relieved him in the stern-sheets. Each of the two men found it difficult to maintain his position, for the whale had, this time, "milled" (turned under water), and was now dragging the light boat through

heavy fragments of ice, that caused it to sway from side to side with that quick, jerking motion which only a well-balanced body can resist.

"Look out there! look to your cars!" shouted Briggs, as the flying vessel approached the entrance to one of those floating tunnels that form one of the many icy curiosities of the northern seas.

When within a few feet of the tunnel, the men placed their oars lengthwise across the thwarts, so that they might not come in contact with the sides of the narrow passage, and bowed their heads to prevent them from striking against the low, jagged roof of ice.

With unabated speed the light vessel flew on, and presently it darted, with the swiftness of a discharged arrow, into the mouth of the archway.

The crew fairly held their breath with anxiety, and kept their eyes upon the pointed bow of the little craft, which was now in a straight line with the opening at the further end, but which, at any moment, was liable to swerve either to the right or the left. In fact, before the boat had reached the center of the passage, there was a loud, swashing noise, as the larboard gunwale heeled over, until it was almost level with the water, while the bows dipped and swayed with that uncertain motion which almost invariably serves as a warning to the crew of a fast boat that the whale is about to change its course.

"Trim boat! trim boat, every man!" hissed the mate, through his closely-compressed teeth, "and stand by, Marline, to do what you can to keep the bows from swinging."

"Ay, ay, sir, but that won't be much," responded the harpooner, "for there's little room in this narrow channel to work a steering-oar."

Scarcely had the speaker concluded, when Briggs, whose watchful eye had noted every motion of the little craft, perceived that the boat's head was about to swing to the right and strike against the side of the passage; and seizing a knife, he quickly severed the running line, thus freeing the vessel from the whale, but not in time to prevent the bow, under the impetus it had already received, from being dashed with considerable force against the icy wall.

The result of the concussion was the cracking of the light cedar planks near the bottom of the boat; and the water now entered the craft with such rapidity, that the exertions of three men were required to prevent the vessel from filling.

The rest of the crew were ordered to "take their paddles," and as they worked vigorously, the boat was soon clear of the dangerous channel.

To add to their danger, a fog had come upon them suddenly, which was so dense, that the after-oarsman could scarcely distinguish the person of the harpooner, who had just exchanged places with the mate, so that he now occupied his proper position in the bow.

The loss of the whale had increased the ill-humor of Briggs, and he proceeded to bemoan his "bad luck," as he called it, in true sailor terms. Stamping upon his cap several times, he wound up by stating that he wished all ice-tunnels were sent to the pit to be melted in brimstone.

This rude witticism was received with a shout of laughter by Tom Plaush, the little Portuguese, who pulled the tub oar, and who was always ready to show his appreciation of all jokes—however stale—that fell from the lips of any of the officers. The laugh had a good effect upon Briggs, who, believing that he had said something brilliant, assumed a waggish air, and glided at once into a pleasant humor.

The good-humor of the mate, however, was not destined to continue for a long time; for soon the boat became jammed between heavy blocks of ice, which again aroused his irritability, and springing upon one of them, he ordered every man with the exception of Marline to imitate his example.

"I want a man I can depend upon to take charge of the boat," he said, addressing the young harpooner, "while I go with the crew to search for our shipmates and inform 'em of our condition."

"If you will take my advice, you'll not go far in search of the other boats," said Marline, "for I think it hardly possible that you will find them in this fog."

"And I think exactly the other way," retorted the mate, impatiently. "All a man has to do to find 'em is to follow his own nose to the north'ard, as I take it; for we've been going south, and the other boats must be somewhere astern of us—not far off either."

At this moment the sound of a horn was heard, apparently proceeding from the direction in which the mate had stated that his fellow-officers might be found; and he now turned his eyes triumphantly toward the harpooner.

"Ay, ay—d'ye see, young man—it's just as I said. Them boats are astern of us, though further off than I thought they were. But by moving quickly over the ice, we'll soon reach 'em. Come on, men—there's no time to lose," he added, turning to the crew.

Leaping from berg to berg, the five men followed closely upon the footsteps of their leader, and in a few seconds they were all shrouded from the view of the harpooner by the dense fog.

"It's a wild-goose chase," muttered Marline, as he proceeded to bail out the boat, "and nobody except a man of Briggs's restless and impatient nature would have thought of undertaking it until he had first sounded the horn, and that had failed to bring our shipmates to us."

As minute after minute passed away, and neither the party nor the boats made their appearance, the young man became more confirmed than ever in his opinion that Briggs's expedition was a useless undertaking.

Once or twice since the departure of his shipmates he had heard the sound of a horn, but the notes of the instrument were so faint that he believed the boats were receding from, instead of approaching, the spot he occupied.

While his mind was still busy with conjectures and fears, he suddenly started to his feet, listening with eager attention, for he fancied he heard a rushing noise ahead of him like that of some heavy object forging slowly through the ice. The noise became louder every moment, and presently the ears of the young man were

saluted with the creaking of ropes, the dull flapping of canvas, and the murmur of voices. An instant afterward the broad black bows and the square foresail of a ship loomed up indistinctly through the fog a few fathoms ahead of the boat, which lay directly in the track of the vessel.

"Ship ahoy!" thundered Marline. "Up helm and keep off, or you will run me down!"

He was evidently heard by those on board, for a dark face was suddenly thrust over the bulwarks forward, but its owner, instead of directing the man at the wheel to "keep off," ordered him to "luff."

The head of the advancing ship, as she came booming on, was therefore within a few feet of the boat before it could obey the helm, the consequence of which was that the bows of the little craft received a thump from the vessel as she swung to windward that caused a few of the thin planks to give way like the shell of an egg beneath the blow of a man's fist.

The boat filled rapidly, and as it sunk the young harpooner leaped upon one of the blocks of ice by which he was surrounded in time to seize a rope which was thrown to him by Tom Lark as the ship came up into the wind with her main-topsails aback.

"The Montpelier!" shouted Marline—"the Montpelier, by all that's good!"

"Ay, ay," gruffly responded Lark, "and the less said about it the better!"

The speaker was a tall man of Herculean frame, and with one of those swarthy, hang-dog faces that never fail to inspire the beholder with feelings of distrust.

"What is the ship doing here?" pursued Harry. "We left her anchored in the bay. And how came you at liberty? Where is Stump? And Alice How?"

"One question at a time, youngster," interrupted Lark, with a broad grin. "You'll know everything presently, and—"

"There's villainy at work here, Tom Lark—ay, downright villainy!" cried the harpooner, as a suspicion of the truth flashed upon his mind.

Grasping the lower part of the main chains, and drawing himself to the rail, he sprang upon the deck, to be confronted by the mutineer, who drew from one of the pockets of his Guernsey a heavy pistol, which he pointed at the head of the youth.

"You've got yourself into a hornets' nest, youngster. It might have been better for you if you had stuck to the ice!"

"Ay, ay," said Marline, with perfect coolness, as he fixed his clear unwavering eye upon the face of the giant. "You have the advantage of me at present, and can murder me if you wish, but you will swing for it in the end."

"Thank you for your good advice," gruffly responded the other, "but I have no intention of murdering you—leastways, not just now—unless you try to kick against what you can't help. I'm just using this iron to keep you quiet while the steward goes after the handcuffs!"

"And by what authority," angrily demanded the young man, "do you thus—"

"Tut! tut!" growled the mutineer, "none of your polly-wow with me, lad. You know how

things are as well as I do. I generally do what I please in my own ship."

"And dare you pretend that this vessel—"

"Is mine? Certainly," interrupted Lark. "She's mine by the law of equal rights. Captain Howard had her for awhile. Now it's my turn. I've been confined in the run a long time, and need a little fresh air, besides the satisfaction of putting some of the captain's friends in my place. As you are the first of these that I've met with, you shall have the honor of filling that position. I rebelled against Captain Howard's authority—you rebel against mine. Captain Howard puts *me* in the run—Captain Lark puts *you* in the run. That's what I call equal rights!"

CHAPTER IV.

IN CONFINEMENT.

THE steward—a tall man, with a long face, dark gray eyes and thin lips, advanced and proceeded to secure the handcuffs to the wrists of the young man.

The latter eyed him sternly for a few moments before he ventured to address him.

"What has the captain ever done to you, Joseph," he then said, "that you should thus turn traitor?"

"He! he he!" laughed the Portuguese. "Captain Lark more better as Captain Howard. He take de ship to some port and sell him—cargo and all. Den me get big share of de profit."

Marline had benefited this man in many ways—had often, by kindly interposition, shielded him from the blows of the first mate; had even, on one occasion, saved him from falling overboard, while he was aloft assisting the watch to reef the main-topsail in a gale of wind; and yet the ungrateful villain seemed now to exult in the misfortunes of his benefactor.

"Where is Alice?" inquired the latter, as the steward locked the handcuffs.

The Portuguese chuckled, but did not reply.

"Speak!" cried the harpooner, fiercely. "Where is she?"

"Why, of course, in de cabin—in her own room—me fasten her in so she can't get out."

"You are a sneaking wretch, Joseph!"

"What you say? No call me dat—I tell you," cried the steward, as he pushed the young man against the rail.

The chief mutineer interposed. With the stock of his pistol he dealt the Portuguese a blow upon the head that felled him to the deck.

"Equal rights!" he said, quietly, as he pointed to the prostrate man and placed the pistol in his pocket; "that's the law aboard o' this craft, in future. This way, Driko, Amolo and Black Squall," he added, motioning to three of the New Zealanders; "take Marline to the run, and fasten the hatch the same as it was fastened when I was there!"

The men obeyed with alacrity, and Marline was in the run. No sooner had the hatch been secured, than he heard the rushing of the water and the grinding of the icebergs against the ship's bottom, as she boomed upon her way.

His reflections were certainly very gloomy. The thought that Alice was only separated from him by a few planks, and yet that he could neither hold converse with her, nor go to

her, in case that Tom Lark or any of his party should insult her, worked upon his mind until it was wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement.

A hand that dropped gently upon his arm, startled him, and on lifting his head, he was enabled to make out in the gloom with which he had by this time become familiar, the outlines of a human countenance.

"Hist!" whispered a low voice, "don't speak too loud; it's me—Stump—and this if I ain't mistaken is Harry Marline!"

"Ay, ay, you are right!" cried the harpooner, much surprised, "but where in the name of Heaven, Stump, did you come from? You were not confined here were you? I thought you were in league with the mutineers."

"That's the way of the world," muttered the shipkeeper, mournfully. "Yes—yes, that's the way with 'em all! Sarcumstances always goes against a man, hows'ever honest he may be! But I didn't think it, Marline—no, blast me if I did—that *you*, my chum, would ever mix up my deeds with those of them infernal scoundrels!"

"Forgive me!" exclaimed the young man, joyfully grasping the hand of his friend as tightly as his irons would admit. "I was altogether too hasty, and I'm sorry for it. But, tell me how you came here?"

Stump proceeded to tell his story, commencing with those incidents with which the reader is already acquainted.

"Yes," continued the exasperated seaman, as soon as he had described the manner in which he had been thrust into the hole, "they fastened the hatches above me, and then I heard 'em go aft, and presently the voice of Tom Lark ordering 'em to cut the cable, and loosen the topsails, broke upon my ears, so that I knowed they had set that big hang-dog rascal at liberty. Scarcely was the whip under way, when I also heard that wild fiend Driko, proposing to Lark to knock me in the head, and thus get rid of me. But Tom refused to comply with the polite request of that infarnal pow-wow."

"Did you overhear anything that gave you an idea of what Lark intended to do with the ship?"

"Not a bit of it, but I haven't a doubt that he intends to take the craft into some out-o'-the-way port, and sell her, cargo and all."

"That's very probable," replied his friend. "It's a pity," he added, "it's a pity that the captain and his boat's crew didn't stay aboard as they are in the habit of doing. Then this misfortune might have been prevented."

"Ay, ay, but we'll be even with 'em yet," replied the narrator, "and now I'll tell you how I came here, which was done by a little of that 'injunyewity' for which the Stump natur' has always been famous. As soon as I perceived that the craft was under way, says I to myself, 'Why,' says I, 'I'm only fastened with ropes, and after considerable tugging and feeling I was mighty glad, lad, to find myself free from the cords.'"

"And afterward you heard the mutineers as they led me to the run," said Marline, "and you thought you'd take a cruise in this direction to see who the prisoner was. Isn't that so?"

"Exactly," repeated Stump, "but I didn't dream who it was until I had crept close to that big opening in the partition that divides the sun from the steerage. Then, as I'd got familiar-like with the dark, I was surprised enough to see you, and I couldn't imagine how you came here, which is the same even now."

Marline at once proceeded to enlighten his companion, and as soon as he had concluded, the shipkeeper seized both the hands of his friend and gave them a hearty squeeze.

"Misfortunes attend the best of us," he said philosophically, "but we'll hope for the best—ay, ay, we'll hope for the best, and work for it too. The gal—Miss Alice—is the great 'consideration,' and if we can only get her safe, why, if we can do *that* it's all right."

"You do not think they'll attempt to harm her?" cried Marline, interrogatively.

"I don't know about Tom Lark," replied Stump, "but, as to them pow-wows, I wouldn't trust 'em—not one of 'em."

"Can you not contrive some way for me to get an interview with Alice?" said Harry.

Stump gave his pigtail a jerk.

"I don't see how it could be done," he said, thoughtfully. "The hatches are all fastened above us—the door of *her* room is locked besides, and—and—ay! ay! I have it!" he suddenly interrupted, "which is that that rascally steward must open the hatch before long to pass you some food, and p'r'aps I'll get a chance to pounce on him, gag him and tie him up. The rest will be as easy as the greasing of a marlinspike. I'll get—if he has 'em about him, which I think is likely—the key of her room and the one which unlocks your handcuffs."

"Hush!" whispered Marline. The sound of footsteps approaching the hatch was heard.

"It's him—it's that rascally Portuguese," muttered the shipkeeper. "I'd know that walk of his from a thousand, lad."

The noise of the crowbar by means of which the hatch had been secured—was heard, as the implement was removed, and the next moment, just as Stump drew back, the trap was pulled aside from the opening, into which a face—the owner of which had stooped upon his knees—was thrust. Without waiting to take a survey of it, the shipkeeper seized the intruder by the hair of the head and pulled him head foremost into the run. But, before he had quite accomplished this feat, and yet when it was too late to draw back, he had seen the face clearly enough to recognize the harsh and decided lineaments of Tom Lark, which were different in every respect from those of the steward.

"Ay, ay, that *was* a mistake, sure enough!" cried Stump, scrambling quickly through the opening, as soon as the uplifted legs of the prostrate man beneath had been removed from it, "such a mistake as I never made before in my life, and as prudence is the better part of valor, I think I am perfectly justified in getting out of the run!"

He lifted his feet clear of the aperture just in time to escape the hand of the mutineer as the latter, who had by this time risen from his uncomfortable posture, made a furious attempt to clutch the bottoms of his pants.

"You wretched imp of Satan!" roared Lark, in a voice of thunder, as the other eluded his grasp, "you shall suffer for this trick!"

And he thrust a hand into the side-pocket of his Guernsey to procure his pistol.

Stump saw the movement, and quickly seizing the crow-bar lying at his feet, he dealt the mutineer such a heavy blow upon his head that he dropped senseless into the run.

"It was all done in self-defense!" cried the shipkeeper, as he leaped back into the hold. "I hope I haven't committed murder—I hope he isn't dead."

"He's only stunned, I guess," replied Marline. "He'll soon come to his senses."

"You think he will?" cried Stump, twitching his pigtail a little nervously. "You think he'll broach to again? My eyes! seeing as that's the case, then I think it would be as well to take time by the forelock—to provide myself with his pistol, and to make him fast, so that he can't do any more harm." And, drawing his sheath-knife, he proceeded, with all possible dispatch, to cut from one of the numerous coils of ratlin stuff lying about him, a sufficient number of the twisted strands to secure the arms and legs of the giant.

This task was soon accomplished, after which the mutineer was properly secured, and his pistol transferred from his own to the pocket of his conqueror.

"Now, then," said the latter, breathing a sigh of relief, "I think he'll be surprised when he wakes."

CHAPTER V.

THE BARRICADE.

THE shipkeeper had hardly concluded when he heard footsteps descending the companion-way, and peering through the hatch he saw the steward just as that worthy—still pale and bloody from the effects of the wounds he had received—gained the bottom of the short staircase.

With a low cry of exultation, Stump pulled himself quickly out of the run, and rushing upon the startled Portuguese, caught him by the throat.

"No noise, you miserable sneak, or down you go, a dead porpoise sure enough. Just hand over the key that unlocks Miss Howard's room, together with the one that belongs to Marline's handcuffs!"

"I—I—de—de— You no kill me!" stammered the steward, nearly frightened out of his wits.

"The keys—the keys!" muttered Stump, shaking him violently; "it's the keys I want—d'ye hear?"

"I—I—give you 'em quick," gasped Joseph, while his eyes fairly rolled in his head with terror.

"Here—here," he added, pulling the required instruments from his pocket; "here dey be, and now you no kill me."

In order to receive the keys the shipkeeper let go the steward's throat, and his joy was so great when the articles were in his hands that for a moment, while contemplating them, he almost forgot the presence of the mutineer.

The latter was not slow to take advantage of

this circumstance. He bounded up the companionway and disappeared.

"Ay, ay, the rascal's gone, sure enough!" cried the shipkeeper, in a tone of mortification, "and it's l'arned me a lesson, which is, that them that doesn't keep their eyes squinted both ways, or that allows their pleasure to turn 'em aside from their duties, is bound to suffer for it in the end."

"Never mind," said Marline, who had risen, and was now looking through the open hatchway; "but come quick and unlock these handcuffs. That fellow I can even hear now giving the alarm on deck, and the sooner my arms are at liberty, the better will it be for us both."

"There's plenty of truth in that!" replied the shipkeeper, as he now set himself to work to unfasten the irons from his friend's wrists; "plenty of truth in that, and—"

"How! Why! A thousand devils! What does this mean?" interrupted the voice of Tom Lark, at this juncture. "Ho! Hallo there—on deck!"

"That rascal has come to, at last!" cried Stump.

Marline's handcuffs dropped clanking to the deck as his chum spoke, and the young man sprung lightly from the run. The shipkeeper secured the trap above the hatch, while the other, rushing up the companionway, fastened the door leading to it, by hooking it on the inside.

This task was not accomplished a moment too soon, for a number of kicks and blows were now dealt against the door, and together with the roaring voice of Tom Lark—who evidently chafed in his confinement like a mad bull—created a din such as is seldom heard in a whale-ship!

"They will pound the door to pieces before many hours," said Marline; "and before that happens, I must make sure of the rifle that hangs in the captain's state-room, so that we can show a good resistance to the bloodthirsty wretches."

Marline hastened to the state-room and procured the rifle—which was already loaded—together with a bullet-pouch and an old-fashioned powder-horn, containing a small supply of ammunition.

"Now then, my friend, quick! Give me the key to Alice's apartment."

"Here it is," replied the shipkeeper, placing the instrument in his hand; "and mighty glad, I warrant you, will be the poor gal to see you, so, away you go, and God bless you both, while Stump keeps guard."

A few steps carried the young man to the door which he sought, and which was nearly in a straight line with the foot of the stairway.

He placed his rifle against the carved wainscot, and turned the key in the lock of the door. Then he knocked gently upon one of the panels; but a half smothered cry of alarm was the only response to the summons.

"Do not fear, dear Alice, it is I—Harry Marline!"

The door was quickly opened, and Alice, with surprise and pleasure beaming in her great brown eyes, stood before him.

She looked so beautiful in her excitement,

that Harry stood for a moment staring upon her like one under the influence of a spell. As the long lashes of those innocent eyes gradually drooped under his admiring glance, he was unable to resist the impulse that sprung up within him. He threw an arm around the pretty waist, and drawing the unresisting girl to his bosom, kissed her with a fervor peculiar to seafaring men.

She gently disengaged herself from his embrace.

"Oh, Harry, I am so glad to see you. I have been so frightened! Those terrible noises! What are they trying to do now? They are at the cabin-door!"

"To break it open," replied Harry.

"Who? the mutineers?"

"Yes."

"Why, I—I thought, when I saw you, that all this was over—that you and your gallant crew had come aboard and persuaded those misguided men to return to their duty."

"I came alone," said the harpooner, and he then proceeded to make her acquainted with those occurrences of which the reader has already been informed.

"Dear Harry," faltered the young girl, "how you must have suffered. I am sorry, now, that you came aboard. Oh, my God! What if they should kill you?"

"Fear not for me, dear girl," replied the harpooner, "I am armed—and so is Stump. We can make a stout resistance; and we will protect you as long as we can stand. I have your father's rifle and—"

"I think I have heard him say that it is damaged so it can't go off."

"I will soon decide that point," said Marline, and he lifted the weapon and scanned the lock.

"You are right, Alice, the piece cannot be discharged, but it can be made useful in other respects."

Crash! went a heavy ax, against the cabin door, at this juncture, and the sharp edge of the instrument was seen to protrude through the woodwork!

"Ay, ay!" cried Stump, "there it goes—it's a-going—the door!"

And even as he spoke, another tremendous blow shivered one of the panels into fragments.

"This way, friend Stump!" cried Marline, "we must form a barricade."

The shipkeeper came, and the two proceeded to erect a sort of breastwork with a sofa, a few chairs and a table, which were firmly secured with ratlin stuff across the doorway of Alice's apartment.

Alice, who had been led by Marline to the further corner of the apartment, stood with clasped hands and pale cheeks watching the movements of her friends, and it was with a sinking heart that she at length heard the door of the cabin give way with a tremendous crash before the repeated blows of the ax!

Then a terrific yell broke upon her ear, as the savage Driko, flourishing a sharp hatchet around his head, and followed by the rest of the mutineers, armed with long lances, rushed down the companionway.

"This way, lads! this way!" roared Tom

Lark, from the run, "I am tied hand and foot! Come and set me free—quick! I am dying to give them two rascals a lesson on equal rights!"

"None of that, you infernal pow-wow!" cried Stump, pointing his pistol at the head of the Kanaka, who was now moving toward the hatch, "none of that or you are a dead fish! It's perfectly astonishing," he added, "to hear such an imp of Satan as that creatur' in the hold aprating about equal rights!"

Every one of the mutineers halted. The sight of Stump's weapon, and the rifle in Marline's hand, had not been anticipated by these men. They looked at one another in surprise, and even seemed disposed to beat a retreat.

Observing these signs of indecision, the resolution of the harpooner was formed in an instant. Motioning to Stump to follow him, he suddenly leaped over the barricade, and coolly advanced toward the party, with the muzzle of his piece directed toward them.

"Put down your arms and return to your duty—every one of you!" he cried, sternly, "if you value your lives! I do not feel disposed to trifle with you!"

"No—no!" yelled the prisoner in the run, "don't yield to 'em, men. Pitch into 'em—they can't fire but two shots at the most. You miserable imp of a Driko, where are you? Why don't you attack 'em? They are only two and you are four! One good assault, and you can cut 'em to pieces—perhaps without the loss of a man!"

"My eyes!" cried Stump, with a low whistle, "it's marvelous to hear the way that animal is urgin' on his pow-wows, while he himself is out of harm's way. Them that does that ain't always the most persuasive, seeing as it's only examples that's contagious."

And the speaker was right, for the mutineers, becoming more irresolute as they marked the firm purpose that shone in the steady eyes of their two adversaries, were deaf to the commands of Lark.

"Come, down with your lances—or we'll fire!" shouted Marline, "and we'll do the same if you attempt to retreat. Remember that whether you fly from or attack us, two of you at least must fall!"

This was not to be disputed, and, dropping his weapon, Driko motioned to his three followers to imitate his example. They obeyed, and the harpooner then ordered the whole party to the deck. The command met with the same success as that which had attended the previous one. The four men, with cowed and sullen faces, ascended the companionway, followed by their two conquerors, who still retained their arms; and as soon as they were on deck, Marline gave orders to "wear" (veer) ship.

As the vessel was under whole topsails, it seemed impossible that this duty could be executed by the few men now in the craft; but the harpooner and his friend lent their assistance, and the yards were swung round at last. As the wind was now from the westward, Marline soon afterward squared topsails and stood due east—hoping that this course would soon enable him to fall in with some of the boats. The man at the wheel, who was none other than the Portu-

guese steward, Joseph, was doubtless much surprised at the change of commanders; but, whatever may have been his thoughts, the coward was too prudent to express them. He was an excellent steersman, and he now did his best, evidently hoping by this means to find favor in the eyes of the man whom he had insulted while he was a helpless prisoner.

"That's right, keep her steady!" cried Marline approvingly, "and you there on the knight-heads!" he added, glancing forward—"look sharp for the boats and the ice!"

"Ay, ay!" answered the dusky seaman, and his voice was far from cheerful.

Descending into the cabin—after having ordered Stump to keep close to the companionway, and to maintain a vigilant watch—the young man now entered the apartment occupied by Alice.

She bounded forward to meet him, and did not offer any very decided objection to the embrace with which he received her.

"I am so glad!" she said, as she gently disengaged herself after he had kissed her at least a dozen times. I am so glad that the mutiny was subdued without bloodshed—that you are safe and uninjured."

"And what is still better, I trust that we will soon fall in with the boats," said Marline. "I wore round about ten minutes ago."

"Wore round? What is that?" inquired Alice.

"What? you, a sailor's niece, don't know what it is to wear ship!"

"How should I?" retorted Alice. "You know that I never took any interest in your salt-water phrases, nor much in anything pertaining to the ocean."

"Why then did you go to sea?"

The cheeks of the young girl were instantly covered with blushes. Her heart beat rapidly. She lowered her eyes and did not speak until she could muster sufficient resolution to lift them to the face of her interrogator. Then the glances of both met—a heaven of womanly tenderness in hers, and in his the deep, strong passion of the man.

She stepped toward him, placed both hands upon his arms and hiding her face in his bosom, said, in a tremulous voice:

"Why should I not acknowledge it! It was that I might be near you."

"And Alice," said he, "if you were not in this ship it would lose all attraction for me. God shield you from all harm," he added, as a sudden, indefinable presentiment for which he could not account, swept over his spirit, "and preserve you, that we may both be made happy."

Then the lovers seated themselves, and with their hands interlocked, talked of the future, which they were pleased to fancy would be full of sunshine and without a cloud.

CHAPTER VI.

A SLIGHT CHANGE.

THEY were very unpleasantly interrupted by the sharp report of a pistol, apparently proceeding from the deck, and springing to his feet, the harpooner darted up the companionway.

As he emerged from the entrance, however, he was seized and thrown down before he could use his rifle, by three of the New Zealanders, who had evidently been lying in wait for him. They fastened his arms and his legs with strong cords, and then stepping back a few paces, glared upon him with Satanic exultation. At the same moment, turning his eyes to the right he saw the corpulent figure of Stump lying senseless near the foot of the mizzenmast; and, bending over it, the sinewy form of the savage Driko. The islander was engaged in securing the limbs of the prostrate man with ropes.

"Ay, ay," said one of the New Zealanders, as though he guessed our hero's thoughts. "De Portuguese at de wheel go behind him and knock him down with pin—strikee on de head—and den de pistol 'e go off, and we know you den pretty soon come up from de cabin, and we wait for you. Hi! hi! hi! Very good dis way to catch you!"

The fierce Driko had by this time finished his task, and rising to his feet, he now turned his eagle eyes, blazing with fury, upon the face of Marline.

"You makee lay down lances, eh? You makee you captain of dis ship, eh? Now *me* captain, and *me* killee *you*!"

With which words he moved to the carpenter's chest, took therefrom a keen-edged hatchet, then rushed to the side of the prostrate youth, and lifted the weapon on high to deal the fatal blow.

At that critical instant a cry of anguish was heard, as Alice—who had been alarmed by the prolonged absence of her lover, and who naturally experienced a presentiment of evil—rushed from the companionway, and threw herself between the glittering steel and the body of the harpooner.

"Spare him! spare him! Oh, for heaven's sake, Driko—stay your hand!" she cried, in tones of such earnest entreaty, that even the stern islander was moved. He remembered—and the wild man of the Pacific isles seldom forget a favor—that this young girl had once, while the vessel was anchored near Honolulu, and the captain was ashore, saved him from being flogged by the flinty-hearted Briggs.

The islander promptly threw his hatchet aside, and implied, by a dignified motion of his hand to Alice, that he would spare her lover's life.

"Me get out of de 'tankee' (thank you) in dis way," said he, "and me no owe you any more. S'posee Marline makee me mad again, why den, habbing no more tankee me killee, *quick*."

"Well, blast me!" cried Stump, who had by this time recovered his senses, that's what I call a lubberly way of reasoning, although good enough, I suppose, for a pow-wow. But, I tell you what it is, blackskin—if you were only a little more than half-civilized, you'd feel that you was under eternal obligation to that gal for saving your hide. She's a sort of omnipotent creatur', she is, and the contrast atween her pretty skin and them tater (tattoo) marks upon yours, is wonderfully striking and picturesque! Besides—"

The mutineers did not give the shipkeeper an

opportunity to conclude his observations. Two of them lifted him to his feet, and hurried him along to the main hold, in which they bundled him without any ceremony. Marline was soon afterward transferred to the same quarter, and Alice was led back to her apartment—the door of which was then closed and locked.

"Well," said Stump, as he rolled over upon his back after the hatch had been secured above the heads of the two prisoners, "here we are again, thrown into nearly the same situation as we was before. We ain't made much progress in good luck, and as misfortunes never comes single, I suppose there'll be more breakers presently. That Portuguese sarved me a most unmannerly trick, sure enough, and if I ever get hold of his long head, I shall punch it of a sartainty. But I've l'arned by it another lesson, which is that them that doesn't look on both sides of a question is pretty sure to get swamped."

"Ay, ay," responded Marline, "and I ought to have thought to caution you to be on your guard against that sneaking villain at the wheel. Do you suffer any from the effects of the blow?"

"I've a hard head," replied the shipkeeper, "which has always been a distinguishin' feature of the Stumps, and mine is peculiar in that way, seeing as I was much given to butting when I was a youngster at school, a-l'arning my letters. I didn't make much progress in books on that account; I was always and eternally a-having these butting matches with my little shipmates, and the more I butted the harder my head grew, which is the reason, as I take it, that after awhile I couldn't get any l'arnin' into it. As a nat'ral consequence, the blow I got from the Portuguese—blast him—hasn't affected my in'ard functions."

"I am glad to hear it," replied Marline. "And now we must hope for the best. I think it very likely that the ship will be seen and boarded before long by our shipmates in the boats."

"If hoping on my part will do any good, she sartainly will be."

He had scarcely spoken when a stream of light, caused by the opening of the run-hatch, darted in the after-part of the hold; an occurrence which was duly commented upon by Stump.

"Ay, ay," said he, "they are a-setting Tom Lark at liberty, and as soon as that animal gets on deck he'll wear ship, and then there'll be no chance for the craft to fall in with any of the boats. It's really miraculous, it is, the amount of mischief that such a man can make before the law brings him to justice, and—"

"Hark," interrupted Marline, "the ship is in the ice now."

"So she is," replied Stump, as the grinding of the floating bergs against the vessel's sides and her bottom became louder each moment: "she's in for it, sure enough, and now if that infernal champion for 'equal rights' as he calls 'em, doesn't look out he'll have us a-going to the locker below in a stove ship, which I wouldn't relish exactly, seeing as my hands and feet are tied, criminal-like, and Davy Jones might make a mistake and take me for a pirate. When I go

below, I'd prefer to go as an honest tar should, with neither ropes nor handcuffs about me. There," he added, as the after hold again became dark, "they've taken him out; he's at liberty, the big mule—and a mighty pleasant time we'll have of it. We are prisoners now for a sartainty."

"It is too soon yet to despair," replied Marline, "Lark will wear ship, of course, but even then there'll be a chance of his falling in with the boats. So keep up your spirits, my friend."

"My spirits ain't sunk yet," retorted Stump, "and I think it would be a heavy sea that 'u'd sink 'em. To make light of our misfortun's is the surest way of getting rid of 'em, and it's astonishing to me how some of my fellow-creatur's will fret themselves about small matters, and think *their* troubles is 'catamount' to everybody else's."

The harpooner was about to reply, when both men suddenly beheld a number of jets of blue flame shoot up amid the gloom of the after-hold, shedding a faint, unearthly light upon the surrounding objects, and thus bringing into bold relief the long, cruel face and gleaming eyes of the Portuguese steward.

"Blast him!" ejaculated Stump, "there he is, sure enough, and if them blue flames ain't prognostical of his future downfall into the great lower hold, that's prepared for such sinners, then you may have my pigtail, which is dearer to me than life. But, what the infarnal blackskin intends to do with the furnace of blazing charcoal that he carries, baffles my scrutiny into human natur'."

"We shall soon see," replied the harpooner—a terrible suspicion flashing through his mind, "we shall soon see. The villain is capable of any crime."

"He's a sneaking wretch," added the shipkeeper, "as is proved by his doing everything in a sneaking way. He must have been one of them that just liberated the chief mutineer, and in his gen'ral underhand manner, he's contrived to remain in the hold, escaping the observation of Lark, who was too glad, I'll warrant, when he found himself free to pay attention to his sat'rite. But what *can* the infarnal imp be going to do with that charcoal furnace?"

Stump, however, was soon enlightened, and the suspicions of his chum confirmed; for the steward now advanced rapidly toward them, and placed the furnace upon a cask within a few yards of their feet. Then he darted forward, and drawing a pump-bolt from his pocket, he thrust it into the mouth of the shipkeeper and secured it with strong cords, heedless of the indignant remonstrances of the harpooner, and his loud hail to those on deck, for the young man did not believe that they were cognizant of the infernal plans of the Portuguese.

"Ay, ay," said the latter, "you may cry until you be hoarse, but neither Lark nor de men will heed you, for dey tink you only do it so as dey can you let out of de hold. Hey! hey! hey! dis is fine revenge for de knock-down you make Larkin give me. Now den, me gag you de same as Stump!" And suiting the action to the words, he forced an iron belaying-pin, with which he was provided, into the mouth of the prisoner.

"Dere," said he, malignantly, when he had secured the instrument—"now me leave you and go on deck. De charcoal burn in de furnace, and de gas kill you before long time, de same as a rat!"

With which comfortable assurance he departed, and the two men soon afterward heard him open the run-hatch in order to make his way into the cabin.

Bound and helpless—deprived even of the consolation of speech—the situation of the two was now miserable enough. The deadly gas from the burning charcoal was fast poisoning the close atmosphere of the hold, and the prisoners could taste the sickening vapor as it entered their throats.

The air became more stifling every moment. The seamen felt their temples throb with violence—an acute pain tearing through the brain like a knife shot at intervals into the head of each.

They believed that their doom was sealed—that they were destined to expire in this miserable pent-up spot, with their rebellious shipmates within hailing distance of them, and yet—if we except the Portuguese—unaware of their condition.

CHAPTER VII.

ADrift.

AS soon as the steward had fastened the hatch of the run, he made his way to the deck. Tom Lark was standing near the mizzenmast watching the operations of the three men, who in obedience to his orders, had commenced to unlash an old half-shattered boat that was secured to the beams, extending crossways above the quarter-deck.

"Come! come! bear a hand there!" he shouted. "We must get the boat alongside as soon as possible. Here, you, steward," he added, turning to that functionary, "jump up there, and help those men."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the Portuguese, in a cringing tone of voice; "me glad to do what you tell me!" and he mounted to the beams.

The lashings were soon unfastened, and, by means of tackle, which had been rigged over the steerage hatch, a few days previously, the boat was hoisted, and then lowered alongside.

"It leaks bad," said Driko, who had jumped into the vessel, for the purpose of receiving the oars and the other articles which Lark had ordered to be passed into it.

"Never mind the leak," said the giant; "the little craft is good enough for those that are to occupy it. I shall let 'em have some provision for the sake of the gal. That's what I call equal rights!"

A breaker of fresh water, another of hard bread, together with pork and beef, were accordingly placed in the vessel. Then followed a couple of line-tubs, a boat-sail, and a bucket of tar with a brush.

"The two rascals can make a tent with them things for the gal. I haven't anything against *her*, and so don't see why she shouldn't be made as comfortable as she can be, considering the circumstances, and according to the law of equal rights."

The ship was now running at the rate of

about seven knots, along the eastern edge of the floe, and, as the boat had been lowered upon the larboard side, it was between the ship and the ice—the latter not being further than five fathoms from it.

"If me may be so bold," said the steward, obsequiously, to the self-constituted captain, "me would like to ask whether you be going to put de prisoners in de boat?"

"Ay, ay," answered Lark, roughly; "but, why do you ask?"

"Because me wanted to know whether me shouldn't go into de cabin and tell Miss Alice to get ready, and gag de mouths of dat Stump and Marline."

"And why should they be gagged?" cried the giant. "You must be mad!"

"Oh, because me t'ink you no like to hear dem—especially dis Stump—talk to you, and call you bad names!" stammered the frightened Portuguese, who readily foresaw that, the instant the hatch was opened, the villainous trick which he had performed, without the sanction of Lark, would be discovered. The reader will, therefore, understand the reason why he wished to obtain the consent of the giant to the measure he had proposed. Should he succeed in doing this, he might make his way rapidly from the run to the spot occupied by the prisoners, and conceal the furnace before the main hold could be opened. The smoke, that had already emanated from the coal, would of course, be perceived, and would excite much astonishment. But the gags in the mouths of the prisoners would prevent them from betraying the author of the mischief.

Thus far, and no further, extended the hastily-formed conclusions of the Portuguese who was certainly not a very deep thinker. It did not occur to his confused brain that the gags would at once be taken from the prisoners to enable them to explain the cause of the smoke, and of their own half-senseless condition!

"Yes, you must be mad!" cried the giant, as he fixed his great, round eyes upon the livid face of the steward; "and I don't know but what it would be as well for me to set you adrift with the prisoners. That would be equal rights!"

"Oh, no! no!" cried Joseph, trembling from head to foot; "me no like to go with dem. Dey kill me, sure!"

"Very well, then, don't talk any more about gags, and such nonsense. If you do, I shall think you are mad, and I don't want any mad-men in this ship. Off with the main-hatch, men!" he added, turning to the two islanders to his elbow; "and move about lively, for we've lost time enough already."

He was obeyed with alacrity, but the hold had scarcely been opened, when an exclamation of astonishment from the Kanakas drew the giant to the spot in time to inhale the gas, and to perceive the thin puffs of smoke that curled upward from the hatch.

With a loud oath, he leaped through the opening, and he then perceived the burning coal, and also, that his two prisoners were gagged. To pass the heated furnace to the Kanakas, with an order to throw it overboard at once, was, with the mutineer, the work of

an instant; then, lifting each of the two prostrate men, one after the other, in his herculean arms, he soon had them placed on deck.

"Now then!" he cried, as he climbed to the combings of the hatch, "take those gags from the mouths of the prisoners."

The islanders obeyed, and as soon as the sufferers had recovered sufficiently to speak, Lark addressed them:

"It was against my orders that you were served in the way you have been; for, although I owe you a grudge for disputing my authority, I wouldn't go to work to satisfy it in any such sneaking manner as charcoal and gags, which ain't in the vocabulary of equal rights. Who was the man that did this mischief? I wish to know, so that I can punish him."

"Ay, ay!" cried Stump, for, thanks to an excellent constitution, both himself and his friend were rapidly recovering from the effects of the deadly carbon. "Ay, ay! that's a square question, and deserves to be squarely answered. In the first place, then, you are perfectly correct when you say that the way we've been treated isn't in the 'vocalbubbler' of equal rights. Them that has suffered as we have can be reasonably sartain upon that p'int, and I'll say, in concluding, that if I ever get hold of the head of Portuguese Joe—which was the creatur' that caused all our woes—I shall give it a miraculous punching."

The eyes of the giant flashed fire, and rushing aft to the mizzenmast, near which the steward had stationed himself, he caught the trembling wretch by the throat and shook him until he was almost senseless.

"You miserable imp! Do you dare to go against the orders of Captain Lark? Do you dare to set my authority at defiance? Do you dare—"

"Mercy! mercy! mercy!" shrieked the Portuguese, trembling in every limb. "Me won't do it any more! Me will do anything you want me to."

"If I wasn't so short-handed, I should blow cut your brains!" thundered the mutineer; "but I want every man to work the ship, and so I shall content myself by tying you up in the rigging and flogging you like a dog! That's what I call equal rights!"

"No! no! no!" gasped the coward, clasping both hands; "only let me go dis time, and never more will me do what you no like. Me cook for you—wash for you—everyt'ing me do, if you let me go!"

But the giant relentlessly dragged the wretch to the mizzen rigging and fastened his wrists to the shrouds.

"And now," said he, "as soon as I have set the prisoners adrift and have tacked ship I, shall give you a lesson with a rope's-end that you won't easily forget!"

The Portuguese continued his cries for mercy; but, without heeding him, the chief of the mutineers now turned, and ordered the New Zealanders to bring the prisoners aft.

"I am going to set you adrift," he said, addressing the two seamen as soon as he had been obeyed, "and you won't starve—leastways not just yet, as there's some provisions in the boat."

"And Alice!" cried Marline; "you—"

"She'll go with you," interrupted Lark, "and there's the means in the boat to make a tent for her. The craft is stove and won't hold you long, but you must make the best of it. That's equal rights!"

"No, blast me if it is!" cried Stump, "and you can't make it out any way you try. Putting three people in a stove boat is about as unreasonable a thing as can be imagined, seeing as to go down isn't to go up. You are a perfect humbug, Captain Lark!"

"Silence!" said Lark, sternly, "you are an ignoramus and don't know anything about my laws, which I again tell you are all founded upon the great principle of equal rights. This is my ship—you came aboard of it—you rebel against my authority—and I set you adrift in a stove boat to punish you for the mutiny, which is perfect justice, and would be understood as such by any person who, like me, believe in equal rights."

"Well, shiver me!" replied the shipkeeper, giving vent to a whistle something like the piping of a boatswain's mate, "if you don't pull and twist things about in the most lubberly fashion I ever saw, and all for the purpose of making 'em look ship-shape, which they can't and never will be for all that, so help me Stump. Why, skin my eyes! you might as well put a greenhorn in a tub on deck and then insist for a sartainty that he could lift himself clear of the bulwarks by pulling upon the sides of the tub. Them that says the days of miracles is past would be mistaken if the doctrine 'breeched' by you was a true one, which isn't the case by any means."

"That's enough," said Lark, "that's enough. The more you talk the more you show your ignorance of the entire subject of our argument. I don't wish to say any more to you for I perceive that you know nothing of equal rights!" And, turning impatiently away, he ordered one of the islanders to go below and bring Alice to the deck.

"Tell her from me," said Marline, addressing the man as he was about to depart upon the mission, "to wrap herself up as comfortably as she can, as, thanks to this rascal," he added, directing an angry glance toward Lark, who received it with the most imperturbable coolness, "she is about to undergo many privations and hardships!"

"God bless the little thing!" ejaculated Stump, in a fervent tone. "It's a raal shame—blow me if it isn't, to turn that sweet creatur' out of house and home, who hasn't never done nothing to deserve such punishment. I'd lay down my life for her any moment—ay, more than that, I'd give her my pigtail if such a present would do her any good. But you'll be brought to justice, Captain Lark. Them that acts like you, must be brought to justice in the end!"

"Amen!" answered Lark, ironically, and at that instant his attention was drawn to another quarter by the sudden loud flapping of the ship's canvas against the masts.

"How do you head there?" he thundered to the man at the wheel.

"No'th, half east, sir—the wind has hauled ahead!"

"Ay, ay, so it has!" cried Lark, "keep her off for the present, White Squall!"

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the islander, as he put up his wheel.

But, as the vessel fell off, a cracking, a grinding sound was heard under the weather quarter, and upon looking over the rail, the mutineer perceived that that part of the ship had swung against the ice, forcing into it the boat alongside with a power that caused the already injured planks to give way in several places.

"Unhook the tackle, Driko, and let the boat go. It's no use now, for it's stove so bad that it wouldn't float an infant. We'll set the prisoners adrift on the ice, and if they choose to fish up the boat, afterward, they can do so. That's equal rights!"

By the time he concluded, the New Zealander had obeyed his order, and both men had watched the boat until it had sunk out of sight among the huge blocks of ice.

"Now, then, luff!" shouted Lark to the helmsman.

"Ay, ay, sir!" and down went the helm.

Then, as the ship came into the wind, the giant, with the assistance of Driko, succeeded in backing the main-topsail.

A minute later and the vessel had drifted with the current alongside of the floe.

"Now, then," said Lark, as he fastened the lower part of a rope around the breast of Marline, just beneath the arm-pits, "over you go!"

And motioning to the islander to take hold of the other part of the piece of rigging, he passed the still bound harpooner over the ship's rail, and, cautioning Driko to maintain his hold, let go of his burden. But the rope slipped from the hands of the islander, and, as a natural consequence, the young man was precipitated to the ice with a force which, for a few minutes, deprived him of his senses.

He partially regained them in time to see the corpulent body of Stump—bound hand and foot—dangling above him as it was being lowered to the ice, and also the form of Alice Howard, as the young girl, closely wrapped in her fur cloak, and with a pale countenance, was descending the ship's side by means of the man-ropes and the steps which had been prepared for her accommodation.

The young man raised himself upon his elbow, feeling bewildered, and half-inclined to believe that he was dreaming. But the rough voice of Tom Lark, and a far gentler voice uttered at nearly one and the same moment, soon dissipated the mist from his brain, and enabled him to comprehend the truth.

"Round with the yards, men. Lively! lively!"

"Dear Harry, speak to me—are you much hurt?"

Then the vision of the ship fading away in the mist, as she boomed upon her new course, was partially hidden from the eyes of the harpooner by the fair young face of Alice Howard that was bent full of sympathy toward his own, while she proceeded to cut, with his sheath-knife, the cords about his ankles and wrists.

"My own Alice, here on the ice! Heaven help her!" cried Marline, as he threw his arm

impulsively around the waist of the sweet girl. "Without shelter—without—"

"Answer me, Harry, are you much hurt?"

"If we could erect some kind of a canopy to cover you—ay, if we could only do that," continued the harpooner, still, in his anxiety for the comfort of Alice, forgetting to answer her question, "then there would be some consolation in the matter."

"You *are* hurt—badly injured!" murmured the girl, with tears in her eyes, "and that is the reason why you will not reply to me."

"Hurt? No indeed; I was only stunned!" And the young man sprung lightly to his feet.

Alice also arose, and placed her hand upon the shoulder of her lover, looking into his face with a bright smile.

"I am so glad," she said. "I am happy now."

"Ay, ay, but blow me if I am!" grunted Stump, who, with his hands and his ankles so closely bound that he was forced to sit in a "doubled-up" position upon the cold surface of the ice, was certainly in an uncomfortable situation. "No, not a bit of it. These quarters are worse than that cursed hold; and if you don't untie me pretty soon I shall commit suicide, much as that goes against the Stump nature, by rolling over the edge of the ice into the water."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHASE.

As the Montpelier bowed upon her way, after Lark had so unceremoniously left his prisoners upon the ice, the giant rubbed his hands with delight, and glancing up at the squared topsails, which were now filled by the northerly breeze, he thus communed with himself:

"It's all right now. A fair wind, and the craft cleared of all unnecessary rubbish. That's as it should be—that's equal rights."

His eye fell upon the steward as he spoke, when he suddenly remembered that he had another duty to perform before he could experience that intense satisfaction which, in his opinion, should be felt by the captain of a newly-acquired ship.

So he dispatched one of the islanders into the cabin for the "cat-o'-nine-tails," an old heirloom that had descended to Briggs from a nautical grandsire, who was famed for his dexterous and frequent use of this instrument.

The native soon returned, and, armed with this cruel weapon, the chief mutineer advanced to the mizzen shrouds, to commence the work of punishment.

The Portuguese writhed like a serpent beneath the torture, which was inflicted with an unsparing hand, and his screams rung in unearthly peals through every corner of the ship, thrilling the hearts of the New Zealanders even with the most uncomfortable sensations.

The captain himself soon became disgusted with these cries, and wishing to entertain himself in a more agreeable manner, cut the steward loose, and by a dexterous movement of his right leg, sent him headlong to the companionway, ordering him in a very im-

polite manner, to go below and prepare his dinner.

"Keep a sharp lookout there, ahead!" he shouted to the man upon the lookout, "and if you see anything in the shape of a boat, let me know it at once!"

"Ay, ay, sir," responded the islander, as he peered with redoubled vigilance through the thick fog that covered the sea.

With another glance aloft, and a hasty look at the compass, Captain Lark then stepped to the companionway, with the intention of descending and hastening the movements of his steward. But he had not quite reached the middle of the staircase, when one of those prolonged and unearthly cries, such as only the wild men of the Pacific isles can utter, broke upon his ear and caused him to start.

"Boat, O-o-o!"

And before the shrill, vibrating voice had quite died away, the captain cleared the entrance of the companionway with a bound, and ordering the man at the wheel to keep off a couple of points, rushed forward and sprung upon the knight-heads.

"Yes; there it was, sure enough—a boat lying just a little off the starboard bow, within ten fathoms of the ship, with her oars apeak and her crew looming up like grim phantoms in the fog!"

"Ship ahoy!" shouted a deep, stentorian voice, which Lark immediately recognized as that of the hoary-headed Briggs; "isn't that the Montpelier?"

"No!" promptly answered the mutineer, and as he spoke, the bows of the ship fell rapidly off; "it's the Neptune!"

"Blow me, but I know that voice!" retorted the mate. "It's Tom Lark's, and—and—ay, may I be swallowed by a shark if the craft isn't the Montpelier! My eyes can't deceive me with regard to a vessel I've once sailed in! Pull ahead, Mr. Spooner!"

"Ay, ay, sir," retorted the second mate, and he ordered his crew to take to their oars.

By this time the ship—which had been kept off a couple of points, thus bringing the wind upon the quarter—had forged ahead so far that the boat was now abreast of the main-rigging; and, as the oar-blades of its crew splashed in the water, the mutineer rushed to the waist, and watched the approaching vessel with an anxious eye.

"A pull on the lee-braces, men!" he shouted to the three islanders, who, besides the man at the wheel and the steward in the cabin, now constituted the crew of the Montpelier. They were all strong men, and with the assistance of their powerful leader, they soon had the yards properly braced to agree with the new course of the ship. The latter was now booming along through the water, at the rate of eight knots, with a man at the wheel—who understood his business; for the New Zealander, besides his readiness in learning to wield the barbed harpoon, soon acquired a good practical knowledge of seamanship. "White Squall"—so named by his shipmates, on account of his fitful temper—was no exception to the rule, and he handled the spokes like a veteran—keeping the vessel so straight that even a frigate's quartermaster

could not have found fault with his steering. Lark's tormentor, however, was still dashing along toward the ship, with that peculiar rapidity which characterizes the whale-boat—a craft which, being sharp at both ends, and gracefully and lightly modeled, is especially formed for speed. The boat was pulled with “double-banked oars”—that is, Briggs and his party, who were in the boat, assisted the crew of the second mate, and it soon was not further than seven fathoms from the Montpelier, abreast the mizzen rigging; and the grim-visaged Briggs, with a voice which certainly could not fail to make an impression, was doing his utmost to encourage the men.

A suspicion of the truth had flashed across his mind at the moment when Lark answered his hail, and, as there were many thousands of dollars already belonging to him, as his share of the cargo now in the Montpelier, he did not feel at all inclined to allow the vessel to escape him.

“Oh, you lubberly rascal, you! But there'll be some fine flogging in that craft when I get aboard of it!” he shouted, as Captain Lark, with a pipe in his mouth, and his loaded pistol in his right hand, although he kept it out of sight, coolly peered at him over the quarter-rail.

“Nonsense,” replied this individual, blowing a defiant puff of smoke toward the boat. “You'll never get a chance for that, my jolly mate! Twist me if I don't think it's an impudent piece of business—your wishing to board *my* ship, when I'm not willing you should?”

“Why, you villain!” roared Briggs, perfectly furious; “you talk as though the vessel belonged to you. I'll teach you better manners presently!”

“The craft is mine,” retorted the mutineer. “You and Captain Howard have enjoyed her and had the good of her for two years. Now I take possession, and I doubt, were the ship alive, that she would be mightily pleased with her change of owners. That's equal rights!”

During this conversation the boat had lessened, another fathom, the distance between it and the ship, and Captain Lark became aware that it was time to show a little resistance.

Accordingly, he ordered the three islanders to arm themselves with harpoons, and take their station at his side—a command which they obeyed with alacrity.

“And now,” said the chief mutineer, leveling his pistol at the head of the second mate, “you'll have the goodness to tell your men to stop pulling. I do not care to have you any nearer, and the sooner you act according to *my* directions, the better will it be for you! If you object, I shall be obliged to send a bullet through your brains; but if, on the contrary, you comply, I shall leave you in unmolested possession of your boat. That's equal rights.”

But the second mate, who was a brave old fellow, and who, having “seen some fighting” in a frigate during the war of 1812, was familiar with gunpowder as well as with whales, coolly eyed the mutineer, and replied:

“Fire, and be hung to you! You can't scare me with any such little plaything as that; besides which, I know you are nothing of a marksman, and couldn't hit the broadside of a frigate,

though it were but a few fathoms off! Pull ahead, lads!”

“We'll see about that!” replied Lark, and taking deliberate aim, he fired.

The second mate did not utter a word of complaint; but the hand that held the steering-oar dropped bleeding and powerless by his side.

Seizing the implement with his left, however, he still encouraged his men, in a low, stern tone, that denoted his sufferings, and the effort he made to prevent the expression of them.

The next moment Briggs had taken his place, and, tearing off a piece of the boat flag, the wounded man, with the assistance of the after oarsman, proceeded to wind it about the bleeding hand.

As soon as this task was accomplished, his assistant seized the boat-keg, with the intention of pouring some of the fresh water it contained upon the rag. But, of all the precious elements in this world, that simple but invaluable one, fresh water, is most prized, and hoarded with most scrupulous care, by seafaring men, whose prolonged absence from hospital shores renders it difficult for them to procure a sufficient supply of the treasure. Hence, it followed that Mr. Spooner very promptly and decidedly pushed aside the keg.

“Not a drop,” said he, “shall be wasted on me. We'll need that water, badly enough, before we get through with this business!”

Another bullet at this instant came whistling toward the boat, and, striking the handle of one of the oars, passed through the sleeve of the mate's jacket.

“Spring, men, spring!” roared Briggs. “Lay back to your oars with a will, and we'll be aboard the craft before that big rascal can load and fire again.”

“I'm not so sure of that,” replied Lark, as he proceeded to charge both barrels of his weapon.

“Some of you must suffer before you beard me, if you succeed in doing that little piece of business at all. I sha'n't give you any quarter, as why should I? You wish to board *my* ship: I don't wish you to do so. You insist, and I kill some of your men—that's equal rights!”

“I'll teach you equal rights with them cat-o'-nine-tails of mine,” thundered Briggs. “They were made for just such rascals as your are.”

“Ay, ay, excellent,” responded Lark. “I've been practicing with 'em, and I like 'em pretty well. Now, then, Driko,” he added, turning to that worthy, “let us see what stuff you are made of. Dart your iron, and pin Briggs.”

“Ay, ay, sir!” responded the swarthy islander.

And, bending back, with his long, lithe figure stretched to its utmost tension, he lifted the barbed weapon, and directed the point toward the heart of the mate.

To say that the latter could stand unmoved before the point of this deadly instrument, directed by an arm and an eye so unerring as those of Driko, would be to declare that Briggs was more than human. He turned pale, and stood prepared to dodge the harpoon when it should be thrown, and, viewing his emotion, the men relaxed their exertions a little, in order to turn their glances over their shoulders. Then the glimpses which they caught of the uplifted

weapon, which the islander had not yet quite placed to his satisfaction, created considerable confusion.

"Whiz-z-z!" came the deadly weapon at last, and down went Briggs, with a suddenness that caused him to tumble over the after oarsman. He had dodged the iron in time, but it had passed close to his ear, just grazing it and severing one of his locks.

"Now then, one good dash, men!" he roared, springing to his feet, "and we'll be alongside!"

But at that instant, another iron came whizzing from the ship, and the 'midship oarsman fell back with a low groan, as the barbed instrument entered his body.

The horror and confusion resulting from this calamity was such that the exertions of the crew at the oars were entirely suspended for some moments; and it was not until the dying sailor had been carefully placed in the stern-sheets, that anything like order could be restored.

Then the men again took to their oars, although they were now so far astern of the ship that she was nearly out of sight in the thick fog.

"Never mind, lads!" cried the dauntless second mate. "We'll be up with 'em yet, for if I ain't mistaken there'll be a calm before many hours. The breeze has already fallen away a little."

And so the men, anxious to avenge their shipmate, whose dead face and glazed eyes in the stern-sheets, confronted them, tugged and strained at the oars with redoubled energy.

The breeze, as Mr. Spooner had declared, was gradually dying away, and Captain Lark deemed it necessary to set the top-gallant sails, which he now had an opportunity of doing, as the boat was too far astern at present to give any trouble.

The additional canvas, when the yards had been hoisted, and the sails sheeted home, increased the speed of the ship to such a degree that her pursuers could do but little more than keep her in sight; and when an hour had passed with no better result, the oarsmen became so fatigued by their almost frantic exertions, that the breath came from their lips in short, rapid gasps, while the perspiration rolled in big drops from their foreheads.

It was at this juncture that Lark—who stood upon the round-house rubbing his hands with great glee, and mentally predicting the entire discomfiture of Spooner and his crew—was startled by an exclamation from one of the islanders in the waist. He turned quickly, and was still more startled by the sudden apparition of another boat a few fathoms off the lee beam, and rapidly approaching the ship!

"Ship ahoy!" thundered the voice of Captain Howard; "isn't that the Montpelier?"

"Up helm! Stand by with your harpoons, men!" roared the mutineer, springing to the quarter-deck with a bound and cocking his pistol.

But before the vessel could fall off a quarter of a point, the bow of the boat struck her side, and a couple of her crew succeeded, a moment afterward, in grasping the man-ropes.

But Lark's pistol, pointed at the head of one

of them, and a harpoon directed at the heart of the other, together with a fierce declaration from the mutineer, that he would shoot the first man that attempted to board him, rather startled the two sailors and caused them to let go their hold.

The captain, however, whose previous suspicions of foul play were now confirmed, darted to the bow with ready presence of mind, and, by means of the boat-hook, drew the little vessel under the mizzen-chains before she could drop astern, and ordered his harpooner to secure her with a rope. This was soon done, but at the same instant, the islanders threw their deadly weapons, which would certainly have done terrible execution, had not the bow-oarsman, whose eye had not quitted his enemies for a moment, warded them off by means of the drag—a square, thick piece of wood, with a rope attached to the middle. With an oath of disappointment, the mutineer then ordered the islanders to procure more arms, and leaning far over the rail as he spoke, in order to make his aim sure, he directed his pistol at the captain.

But before he could pull the trigger, the boat-hatchet was hurled at his head with unerring precision, by the same courageous seaman who had foiled the murderous intentions of the dusky islanders. The back of the weapon struck the giant upon the temple with great force, felling him to the deck like an ox. Then, arming themselves with lances, the boat's crew, headed by their captain, scrambled pell-mell up the ship's side.

Perceiving the uselessness of resistance, as they were outnumbered by six to three, the New Zealanders surrendered themselves, and every one of them, not excepting the man at the wheel—who was relieved by the orders of the captain, were ironed and thrust into the run. Tom Lark—*Captain* Lark no longer—who recovered his senses by the time these little preliminaries had been gone through with, was also secured with handcuffs and placed in the hold to enjoy the company of his fellow-conspirators.

It was about this time that the man at the wheel, upon casting a careless glance over her shoulder, saw the boat of the second mate, which was faintly distinguishable in the fog astern. He notified the captain, who immediately had the main-topsail backed and the ship brought into the wind.

But he felt so much anxiety with regard to his niece and her companions—for Driko had at once informed him of the disposition that had been made of them by the chief mutineer—that he scarcely heeded the boat when it dashed alongside.

The hearty shake of the hand which he received from Mr. Spooner, however, as the old man confronted him, recalled him to himself.

"This has been a bad business," said the poor fellow, as a contortion caused by the pain in his wounded hand passed over his face. "Tom Block was killed!"

"What!" cried the captain, with a start, "Tom—"

"Ay, ay," interrupted the mate, "killed by a harpoon thrown by one of the mutineers,"

and he then proceeded to give a graphic description of the incident.

"I am sorry—very sorry that this has happened!" cried the captain, with much emotion.

"Shall we hoist the boats?" inquired Briggs, at this juncture.

"Ay, ay, the waist-boat, but not mine," replied the captain, "for I shall presently go in search of Alice."

"And what shall we do with the body of Tom Block?"

"Sew it up immediately. We will have the burial as soon as we can."

Accordingly, as soon as the boat had been hoisted, the corpse was placed upon the carpenter's bench—palms, twine and needles were procured; a piece of an old sail was wrapped around the lifeless form, which was securely stitched up, after a number of bricks had been placed in the bottom of the shroud. Then the flag was hoisted at half-mast, the gangway plank made ready to receive its burden, and the captain, with an open Bible in his hand, stood ready to read the funeral service. The men mustered at the given signal, and, with uncovered heads, listened respectfully to the words that were read to them from the Holy Book. The chapter was well chosen—well calculated to touch the hearts of those rough men with its simple yet beautiful truths, and when the reader had finished, and the shrouded body, after sliding adown the sloping board, dropped into the water with a dull splash—the crew walked forward with a feeling of consolation that they had not dreamed they could have experienced so soon after the death of their shipmate.

"He always did his duty—Tom did!" said an old seaman, "and if he don't go aloft it won't be his fault!"

Further conversation was prevented by the voice of the captain ordering the men to wear ship, and as soon as this task had been accomplished, two men were posted upon the knight-heads to keep a good lookout.

This duty, however, was soon rendered almost unnecessary, by a dead calm, which fell upon the sea before the vessel had advanced a mile upon her new course. The sails hung motionless upon the yards, and a feeling of unaccountable drowsiness stole over the weary helmsman. He could scarcely keep his eyes open, and it was only the presence of the captain, who, with rapid and impatient strides was walking the quarter-deck, that prevented him from indulging in sleep.

"Mr. Spooner," said the skipper, addressing the second mate, who was near the companion-way bathing his wounded head in cold water, "I can't endure this fearful suspense much longer. I shall have my boat manned immediately after supper, and shall go in search of Alice!"

"Hadn't you better wait until morning?" said the old man. "We are at the least about four leagues from the ice, by this time, and then in the darkness of the night—it is getting dark even now—coupled with this fog, you won't stand much chance in finding your niece."

"I can't endure this suspense. I should lose

my senses before morning! I *must* look for her, and that as soon as possible!"

"Supper is ready, sir!" cried, at this moment, the Portuguese steward, Joseph, thrusting his head through the companionway.

Joe had escaped the handcuffs by a plausible tale, in which he made it appear that he had no hand in the conspiracy to take the ship, and had exhibited the red stripes upon his back, stating that Lark had flogged him because he rebelled against his measures. Howard, who was not of a suspicious nature, credited this story; but the steward, fearing that the prisoners in the run—or if not they, the young harpooner, Harry Marline, and his friend Stump—in case they should ever be picked up—would eventually betray him, had resolved to make his escape from the ship as soon as possible.

The helmsman, whose drowsiness had been noticed, had been drugged by the Portuguese, who had presented him with a glass of drugged liquor soon after he took his position at the wheel. The consequence was that, by the time the decks were deserted by the officers and crew—who had gone below to get their suppers—the steerman's head dropped upon his breast, and he fell into a deep slumber.

The next moment the steward—who, under pretense of going to the locker for a certain dish, had contrived to make his way stealthily to the deck—glided to the waist-boat, cautiously glancing around him to make sure that he was not observed, quickly severed with his knife the lashings and also the falls. Then he pushed the vessel overboard, and making his way to the captain's boat, he sprung into it, severed the rope that held it to the ship, and seized the steering-oar.

"Done!" he muttered, exultantly, as he rapidly sculled the craft away from the Montpelier, and gave the other boat a shove with his foot, "me clear of dis vessel at last, and me soon be picked up by some other ship, for de Ochotsk Sea is full of 'em. De cap'n can no come after me," he added, glancing toward the waist-boat, which was drifting off with the current. "He! he! he! me serve 'em fine trick."

As he spoke he redoubled his exertions, and he was soon so far from the Montpelier that he would have been completely shrouded by the fog from the gaze of any person on deck. The boats were not missed until half an hour afterward. The captain was the first to perceive the loss, which overwhelmed him with astonishment, indignation, and grief. The helmsman was awakened and questioned, but he could throw no light upon the subject; and it was not until many hours afterward—when the prolonged absence of the steward from the cabin began to be remarked—that any definite conclusions began to be formed.

"Ay, ay," said Briggs, in his blunt way, "I always *did* suspect that fellow; and now I feel certain that he has deserted the ship, and that he cut away the other boat to prevent us from catching him!"

"It is a terrible loss," replied the captain, with a groan—"the loss of those boats, at the present moment; for we have not another in the ship, and so have no means of going in search of Alice. God help her! God help the poor girl!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE DISAPPEARANCE.

To return to the little party upon the ice.

We left our friend Stump sitting in a very uncomfortable position, near the edge of the frozen block, and complaining because the lovers had not yet unfastened his bonds.

"Oh, a thousand pardons, my dear friend!" replied Alice, blushing deeply. "It was, indeed, very wrong on my part to forget you."

"I am more to blame, Alice, than you are," interrupted Marline, drawing his sheath-knife and proceeding to cut the cords from the wrists and ankles of the prostrate seaman. "Ay, ay, old chum," he added, as Stump, with a sigh of relief, arose to his feet, and began to kick the "cramp" from his little legs; "it is all my fault that you were overlooked."

"Never mind apologies now," replied Stump, "seeing as the way you acted was perfectly natural, considering that you hadn't met for half an hour. But those pow-wows, twist 'em, have served us a lubberly trick; for, besides taking the ship, they haven't left me a drop of 'ile to grease my pigtail with!"

"Your pigtail, friend Jack, is of but little consequence at present," said the harpooner; it will doubtless need oiling more than it does now before we are picked up."

"Ay, ay, there's some truth in that last," retorted Stump, with a mournful grin, "and I'm sorry for it, because I always like to keep the thing neat and shining like, when there's a young lass to look at it."

"Then you may set your mind at ease, my friend," said Alice, kindly, "for I like the pigtail as well without it as with it."

"The Stumps always wore 'em 'iled," said the shipkeeper, shaking his head; "but it's consoling to me at any rate, Miss Alice, to hear you say that you like mine as well when it doesn't shine as when it does."

"We are certainly in a very disagreeable situation at present," said Marline.

"There's no disputing that p'int," replied Stump, as he threw a woeful glance around him.

"There isn't a very fine prospectus spread out before us, seeing as these cold blocks and bergs of ice don't look quite as comfortable as the quarters we are used to. Then, again, we ain't got any provisions to live on, which is another perfectly overpowering consideration."

"It's a pity," said Marline, "that the captain and his crew did not remain aboard the ship, as they are accustomed to do. Then all this trouble would have been prevented. You and I, Stump, can easily endure the hardships before us; but with Alice it is different."

"Indeed," said the captain's niece, assuming a gay tone; "you will find that I can bear them, too. Besides," she continued, "as soon as the fog clears, we will see the other boats, and then we can go ashore, and build a tent, and make a good fire."

"All this will come to pass, in time, I have no doubt," replied Harry, "and very soon too, if Briggs and the men, who left me about an hour before the ship stove my boat, have succeeded in their purpose, which was to find our friends. But if they have failed, and have lost themselves, we may have to pass the night upon

the ice, and perhaps a great portion of next day, for this fog, in my opinion, will be of long duration."

"Never mind," said the young girl. "You perceive I have a thick fur cloak, which will keep me warm enough, under almost any circumstances; but you and Stump, I am sorry to see, are not very thickly clad."

The two seamen laughed good-humoredly.

"We are used to roughing it, as you know, Alice," said Harry, "and don't feel the cold."

"Ay, ay," cried Stump, "that's it; our hides are as tough as bull-fish, and we can only feel consarn on your account, sweet lass, for it must be owned that this fog isn't as good for your lungs as the steam of a cup of tea."

"It won't hurt me, nevertheless," said Alice, smiling; "for I have a good constitution, and you know I have remained on the deck of the Montpelier, in a thick fog, and when the weather was much colder than it is now."

"Well, blast my eyes!" cried Stump, in admiration, "if ever I saw such a perfect little duck of a philosopher before. There are few women that could speak so cheery-like under present circumstances."

"You are right there, chum," said Harry warmly. "I have seen girls before now, that would do nothing but moan and faint, were they to find themselves in a predicament of this kind."

Alice did not attempt to conceal the glowing manifestations of pleasure that her lover's compliment called forth upon her cheek, and in her eyes. But, before the blush and the smile had faded from her face—with the natural desire to defend her sisters, which animates the bosom of every true-hearted woman—she added:

"It is hardly just, Harry, to imply that any woman would act unbecomingly under circumstances in which you have never seen her placed. A girl, who shrinks and trembles when threatened with some light misfortune, may show much bravery and fortitude upon occasions of great peril."

"True enough," said the harpooner; "but you must acknowledge," he added, smiling, "that there are some young women who, by their general behavior alone, give the most unequivocal proofs of a nature too weak and frivolous to evince resolution, or unselfish devotion, under any circumstances."

"That's so," put in Stump, "and Molly Banks, of Nantucket, was one of them kind. In my young days, I made a lubber of myself, by proposing to splice hands with that young she. But, she hadn't enough devotion in her natur', she said, to marry a man that wore a pigtail. This took me all aback, as well it might; says I, 'Why, Molly,' says I, 'the Stumps always wore 'em, and mine is very becoming to me!'"

"Nonsense!" says she, "it's too old-fashioned; I'd never have courage to take a husband with one of them things."

"All right," says I, as I sheered off, "a woman that hasn't neither devotion nor courage isn't to my taste."

"You are a sensible man, Jack," cried Harry, smiling. "I think I should have acted in the same manner, had I been in your place."

"The damsel was certainly unworthy of you, friend Stump, and showed herself to be a very frivolous creature," said Alice.

She drew her cloak more closely about her as she spoke, for a cold, drizzling rain had just commenced to fall, increasing the chilliness of the atmosphere, and dampening the young girl's cheeks and the thick braids of her hair.

Her lover, who had been watching her with tender concern, now motioned to Stump, and made his way to the spot near which the boat that Lark had provided for their accommodation had been stove and sunk. The wreck of the little craft was still partially visible, for, as the two men perceived, upon making an examination of it, the keel had become wedged in a narrow fissure that extended across a shelf of ice about a foot and a half beneath the surface of the water.

"This is fortunate!" cried the harpooner, "for the wreck and its contents will be of great service to us. We can pull the boat out of the water, I think, with a little exertion."

"Ay, ay," replied Stump, "we can do it with the help of some of the whale line—a few coils of which are still left in one of the tubs, as you can see for yourself."

The young man threw off his jacket, as his shipmate spoke, and rolled up one of his shirt sleeves to his shoulder. Then stooping over the edge of the ice, he plunged his naked arm into the partially submerged boat, and seizing the end of the rope to which the shipkeeper had alluded, he drew it up and proceeded to coil the line upon the surface of the frozen raft. After this task had been accomplished, a part of the rope was secured to the shattered bow of the boat, whose contents, consisting of a few lances, a couple of harpoons, a hatchet, a small bucket of tar with a brush, the two line-tubs, the boat-sail, a few large chunks of salt beef, a breaker of fresh water—another containing hard bread—and a few of the other articles, were taken out. Then both Marline and his chum grasped that part of the line which was about a fathom from the place where it was fastened, and tugged and strained at it until they had succeeded in raising the head of the vessel above the edge of the ice. A quarter of an hour's work accomplished the rest, and, as the shattered craft lay dripping before them, upon the ice, the little party exchanged glances of the most intense satisfaction.

"We'll soon have a shelter rigged for you now, Alice," said the harpooner, as the young girl, who had been watching the operations of her lover with much interest, glided to his side.

She looked up gratefully into his face as he spoke, and placed her hand upon his arm.

"How will you do it?" she inquired, "with that broken boat and those line-tubs?"

"You shall see," replied Marline, and drawing his sheath-knife, he commenced to cut the pieces of rope-yarn that held the sail to the mast.

It had previously been unrolled by Stump, and as the last rope-yarn was severed, the shipkeeper twisted the cloth into as small a compass as possible. Both men then seized it and began to wring it out, for it had become thoroughly

soaked, and required a "little drying" before it could be used for the purposes in view. The manner in which the two seamen handled the cloth as they squeezed it, seemed droll enough to Alice, and more than once, as Harry glanced toward her, he saw a sly smile hovering about the corners of her mouth. The task, however, was soon accomplished, and, spreading out the sail, the harpooner then proceeded to cover it with a coat of tar, so that the rain might not penetrate the cloth; while Stump, in accordance with the directions of the young man, lashed one of the line-tubs—turned upon its side—to the after part of the boat, and the other in like manner to the forward part. An oar was then placed lengthways above the vessel, with each of its ends resting upon one of the tubs, to which it was securely fastened in a short time by the skillful fingers of the harpooner and his companion.

The tarred sail was then thrown across the oar and secured to the broken gunwales, in such a manner as to form quite a respectable roof, and which could be opened at any moment on one side. So much having been done, the young man seized the hatchet, and knocking away all the thwart, with the exception of one, gave them to Stump, directing him to stop up the holes in the sides of the vessel with them, as well as he could. While the shipkeeper was engaged in this duty, Marline examined the inside bottom of the boat, and was glad to perceive that the planks which covered it were still in good condition.

He wiped them with a piece of canvas, until they were as dry as he could make them in this manner; and then, with the roll of sail-cloth that had been found among the other contents of the vessel, he assisted Stump in his efforts to stop up some of the many crevices and holes in the broken bows and sides of the boat.

"There, Alice!" he cried, springing out upon the ice, as soon as this duty was finished, "you can now go into your ark, which will at least keep you from getting wet."

"It is very nice," said the young girl, "but is there room for us all?"

"Oh, yes, in case we should care to go in. But Jack and I prefer to stay outside for the present, so as to watch for Briggs and his party, or for any of the boats."

As he spoke, he seized the hand that Alice extended to him, and helped her into the vessel, his heart throbbing with delight as he listened to the praises that she lavished upon the simple accommodations which had been prepared for her.

"It is almost as warm and snug here," she said, when she had seated herself, "as the cabin of the Montpelier."

"My eyes!" whispered Stump in Harry's ear, "it's a real pleasure to do anything for this gal; she takes everything so ship-shape and sailor-like!"

"I am glad it pleases you, Alice," said Marline, "but with the help of a few blankets it might have been improved."

"Indeed, Harry, there is not the least need of them, so far as I am concerned, for I have my cloak, which will keep me warm enough."

The harpooner was about to reply, when

Stump twitched his arm, causing him to turn his head.

The shipkeeper moved to the edge of the ice-raft, by a wink of the eye implying that he desired Marline to follow him. Wondering what he could wish to say to him, of a secret nature, the young man made his way to the side of his companion, who then addressed him in a low voice:

"I didn't wish to alarm the gal," said he, "but you can perceive that the tide is changing, and that we'll soon, on that account, be drifting in a direction that won't be likely to carry us toward the boats."

"Ay, ay, that's true enough," said the harpooner; "I expected it; but we must trust to Providence."

"Them that trusts entirely to that," said Stump, oracularly, "don't always come out right in the end, which isn't the fault of Providence, hows'ever, but the fault of them that don't take advantage of the chances and such like which it offers to 'em to get out of their scrapes. There was a chaplain on board of the *Minerva*, a craft that I once sailed in, and during a terrific gale that we had, the ship leaked badly, and we'd all have gone to Davy Jones, if we had taken the advice of the Bible-man, who wanted us to leave the pumps and pray to God to save the vessel! My eyes! she would have gone down in no time if we'd done that; but the captain was a sensible man, and ordered us to pump away, by which means we saved the craft, which we wouldn't have done if we had leaned on Providence!"

"You did perfectly right in your case," said the young man, "and your words would seem to imply that there is some means that Providence offers us to get out of our present uncomfortable situation. If so, I should be glad to hear you explain yourself."

"Here goes, then," replied Stump, smoothing his pigtail. "The land, you know, is not much more than a league to the eastward of us, and we have a couple of oars. With them oars, it's my honest opinion that we might contrive to work this block of ice that we are standing on, to the shore, which would be much better than to let the current carry us any further from the boats. As to Briggs and his party, there is no use waiting for them, for we couldn't do 'em any good if they should come."

"True enough!" exclaimed Harry. "I wonder that this plan did not occur to me. We had better go to work at once!"

And the two men were preparing themselves for the task, when the sound of a horn, blown from a distance which could not have been greater than a quarter of a mile from the spot they occupied, saluted their ears. The noise was repeated several times, and it drew the pretty Alice from her miniature ark.

"Surely, Harry, that is one of our boats," she said, moving to the side of the young man. "Oh, I am so glad!"

"It is a pity that we have no horn," said the harpooner, in a voice of regret, "otherwise we could make our position known."

"But the boat will come to us as things are, perhaps," suggested Alice.

"It may, or it may not," answered Harry.

"I think it very likely that it will turn off in some other direction before it gets here, and for that reason, I think I shall try to go to it."

"Oh, no!" cried the young girl, anxiously.

"Briggs and his party ought to serve as a warning to you. I would not do so, for the world. You will certainly lose yourself as the others have done."

"You have not the least reason to be alarmed, Alice," retorted the young man; "the boats were much further off when Briggs left me than this one is now, and besides I have only to go in a straight line to get to it."

This assurance somewhat quieted the fears of Alice, but some minutes elapsed before the persuasions of her lover could reconcile her to his departure. At length, however, impressing a kiss upon her cheek, and assuring her that he would soon be back, he moved away, leaving the young girl to watch him, until the fog had shut him from her view.

Even then she did not stir from her position, but kept her eyes turned toward the spot where Marline had disappeared; and as minute after minute passed, she still remained, gently refusing to comply with the entreaties of Stump, who wished her to return to the ark that she might not be exposed to the rain.

Half an hour passed, still neither her lover nor the boat appeared to calm her uneasiness; and when the time had lengthened into a full hour, she turned her pale, agitated countenance toward the shipkeeper, and expressed her anxiety in a tremulous voice.

"There's not the least reason to be alarmed, Miss Alice," said Stump, "not the least. The lad has probably reached the boat long before this, and has got into it. But it is probably so jammed in the ice that they can't get here in a moment."

The young girl shook her head.

"No, no!" she cried, "he wouldn't have entered the boat; he would have come right back after finding it, if nothing had happened."

Perceiving that he was unable to calm her fears, the shipkeeper reflected a moment and then drew a small pocket compass from his Guernsey, and looked at it. He had formed the resolution to go in search of Marline.

"I'll bring you news of the lad in a short time," he said, turning to the young girl and exhibiting the compass. "This instrument will let me know my bearing, so that I can easily find my way back."

"You will soon return, my friend?"

"Ay, ay, bless you, very soon, for I've sworn to stick to you, and my conscience wouldn't allow me to remain long absent."

And ducking his head, by way of a bow, Stump departed, presenting a comical figure, as he leaped from berg to berg. He made his way with a celerity which would not have been expected of a man of his proportions—moving in the direction of the horn which was still blowing, but which, it struck him, did not sound so near as it did an hour before.

This circumstance made him feel uneasy, for if Harry had succeeded in reaching the boat, it would not now be receding instead of advancing. He hurried on, however, until a sloping iceberg, about ten feet high and fifteen feet in

length, barred his further progress. This he would be obliged to scale before he could proceed, for he could not go around it on account of a channel of water, too wide to cross, that bounded it on each side. He looked up dubiously at the top of the frozen pile, and, while still hesitating at its base, he fancied he heard a shout close to his ear.

He looked around in amazement, and as he did so, the cry was repeated, this time louder than before, and seeming to emerge from the very heart of the iceberg.

"Who is that?" cried the shipkeeper, "and where are you?"

"It is I—Harry Marline," retorted the voice. "Is that you, Stump?"

"Ay, ay, it's me, bless your eyes, but skin me if I see how you could have condensed yourself so as to get into this solid chunk of ice!"

"You are mistaken," retorted the laughing voice of the harpooner, "there's a rift in the berg like a ravine. You can see it if you climb to the top where I was before I slipped into it."

"And is this where you've been all the time?"

"Yes. The inner side of my quarters are so slippery that I can't climb them! You had better get a rope and—"

"I have a bunch of ratlin stuff in my pocket!" interrupted Stump, who generally carried a little of everything useful about him, "which I guess will do."

And pulling out the bunch of rigging, he fastened one of its end to his pigtail—for he did not like the taste of tar sufficiently to put the strands in his mouth—and proceeded to scramble to the top of the ice, which he finally gained with much difficulty. Peering through the mouth of the rift, he saw the upturned face of Marline, toward which he now lowered the disengaged end of the piece of rigging. It was soon in the young man's hand, and Stump was about to unfasten the other end from the pendent mass of hair, so as to secure it to one of the rough projections of ice, when his foot slipped, causing him to descend half-way down the frozen declivity, which he had mounted with so much trouble, and where he now hung suspended by his pigtail to the rope; for the young harpooner, believing that his corpulent chum was clinging to it with his hands, and that he was doing him a good service by holding on to the piece of rigging, had not allowed it to escape his grasp.

So there hung the stout little shipkeeper, kicking his legs and vociferating in an excited manner, until at length he succeeded in turning himself and grasping the rope with both hands.

"You sarved me a bad trick, Marline, without knowing it," he said, as soon as he had regained the top of the berg. "Blast me if I think my pigtail will ever recover from the effects of it."

And he then proceeded to explain the predicament in which he had been placed. The harpooner expressed his sympathy and regret, after which Stump proceeded very carefully to fasten the rope to an icy projection near the mouth of the crevice.

Assured that the ropes were perfectly secure Harry clambered hand over hand, until he had gained the top of the berg, and then expressed

his intention of continuing his search for the boats.

"As for you, Stump," he added, you had better make your way back to Alice, as speedily as possible, so as to calm her fears on my account.

"Willingly enough will I do that," replied the shipkeeper, gently smoothing his ruffled pigtail, "for I'm mighty tired of this ice-cruising business—I'll give you my word for that."

The two men separated soon afterward, but not until Stump had presented the pocket-compass to his chum, and delivered a long tirade upon its merits.

"You are sure you can find your way back—are you not?" shouted Harry, after he had gone a few paces.

"Ay, ay," responded Stump, "there isn't a doubt upon that p'int. All I have to do is to follow my nose, which won't twist either to the right or the left, seeing as it's perfectly flat."

Each of the seamen then continued his course—the shipkeeper waddling along toward the spot where he had left Alice, which was not more than five hundred yards from the scene of his late adventure, and the young harpooner darting swiftly forward in the direction of the blowing horn.

Stump strained his eyes, as he neared the point of his destination, eager to get a glimpse of the captain's fair niece. In order to relieve her anxiety as soon as possible, he kept up a continual shouting as he advanced.

"It's all right, Miss Alice—bless your pretty eyes—it's all right! I've seen him, I have, and he's well and hearty! He was penned up in a sort of a seal-hole, but I got him out of it in quick time, and he's now started off again after the boats."

Quickening his pace as he moved on, he had soon made so much progress that the little ark, looming up through the fog directly ahead of him, suddenly broke upon his view. Then looking around him in every direction, and not seeing Alice, he stopped short, and rubbed his eyes, to make sure that they had not been disarranged in such a manner as to deceive him.

The next moment he laughed very quietly to himself.

"What a lubber I am getting to be, to think that the poor gal would have stood where I left her all this time. She's gone into her little cubby-hole, and is now, I dare say, a-grieving and taking on in a sad fashion. And that's why she didn't answer my shouting as I came on. Ay, ay, that's it, sure enough!"

Eager to soothe the young girl with the news of her lover's safety, he hurried forward until he had gained the side of the boat, when he hastily threw aside the end of the tarred cloth that covered it. To his astonishment and dismay, the vessel was empty!

Little did the harpooner imagine this as he moved onward over the floating bergs. Hope made his step light and his heart buoyant. The horn was still being blown, and he doubted not that he would soon reach the boat. Suddenly, however, the sound of the instrument became

hushed. He paused, waiting in vain for a repetition of the familiar notes. He heard only the whispering noise of the rain, the gurgling of the seal, as it rolled about in the water, impatient for the sunshine, and the cry of the northern bird, as it wheeled in circles through the foggy air. Now and then, it is true, a louder and more startling noise would salute his ears, when some huge mass of ice, becoming loosened on the summit of a miniature cathedral, would fall, with a tremendous crash, to the base of the tower.

He continued his search a quarter of an hour longer, when his further progress was prevented by a channel not less than fifteen feet wide, and which separated the floe into two parts. As he was turning to retrace his steps, his attention was drawn to a number of little eddies that suddenly appeared upon the surface of the water. Round and round they whirled, becoming larger every moment. A peculiar noise, resembling the distant rolling of a drum, rose up from the depths of the sea. The berg upon which he stood trembled like a rock when the rumbling earthquake approaches its foundation. At length the little whirlpools vanished; the water bubbled and broke into ripples—then parted with a roar, as the hump of a huge whale rose above the surface. Marline had no difficulty in recognizing this monster as the same from which Briggs had been obliged to 'cut,' for he saw his own irons protruding from its body. The barbed instruments seemed to madden the creature with pain. It rolled and plunged from side to side, so furiously lashing the water with its flukes, that the harpooner was enveloped in clouds of spray. In order to escape this uncomfortable shower-bath, he ascended a "crystal tower," the upper part of which, though out of range of the flying drops of water, yet afforded him a good view of the whale. He continued to watch the monster with much interest, feeling sorry that he had not the means with which to put an end to its sufferings. The noise of its spoutings was inexpressibly mournful; it was not unlike the half-smothered shriek of a drowning man, heard amid the roaring of the blast. Soon, however, the animal became silent; for a few seconds it remained nearly motionless; then it rushed quickly backward and breached (sprung upward) nearly its full length out of the sea. For an instant, with its fins extended, and the tremendous proportions of its body fully exposed, it hovered in the air, and then came crashing down with a noise like the bursting of a thunderbolt! The upheaving waters dashing against the icebergs, agitated them on all sides. The frozen mass occupied by Marline rocked so violently that he could scarcely maintain his position. He descended from it just in time to catch a glimpse of the whale's uplifted flukes, as the monster dove into the green depths of the sea.

"Ay, ay," he muttered, sorrowfully, "there it goes at last—back again to its watery chambers below, as though it would flee from the torturing pain caused by those barbed irons. Would to Heaven that we had succeeded in killing it! It must suffer terribly!"

He turned, and glancing at the compass in his

possession, hurried off, with the intention of returning to the ark. He had not gone far, however, when he heard upon his right a light, pattering noise, such as a dog might have made in running over the ice. His curiosity being excited, he moved in the direction of the sound, peering keenly through the fog as he advanced. The footfalls receded rapidly, but pressing steadily forward, the young man was enabled, before long, to distinguish the faint outline of some animal gliding swiftly on ahead of him. He quickened his steps into a run; as he did so the object disappeared behind an iceberg. Marline soon gained the frozen mass, but the creature, whatever it was, had disappeared.

"This is strange!" muttered the harpooner. "The animal must be pretty swift of foot to get out of my sight so quickly; though it is true the fog would hide it, if it were only a few yards from me. Perhaps, however, it has crawled into some hollow in the ice."

So saying, he commenced to peer into the nooks and crevices among the bergs, after which he climbed to their summits to look for rifts, using his boat-hatchet freely when he encountered any rugged mass that might contain a secret chamber; but his search was unrewarded. He thrust the hatchet in his belt, and had turned once more for the purpose of making his way to the ark, when his glance fell upon an object that caused him to utter an exclamation of surprise and horror. He advanced a few steps to assure himself that he was not deceived by any peculiarity in the formation of the ice; then he moved to the side of the object and eyed it closely. It was the skeleton of a human being, extended upon a shelf of ice that protruded from the lower part of a lofty berg. Bleached by wind and sunshine, it had evidently lain here for many weeks. Every particle of flesh had been stripped from its bones by some hungry bear that had been cast adrift upon the floe. It lay upon its back so that its hollow sockets, partially glazed over with ice, were turned upward, as if it were trying to discover whether or not its spirit had passed to the ethereal shores of Heaven. Marline gazed upon it for a long time, and then clapped his hand to his brow, as though some sudden recollection had flashed across his mind.

"Ay, ay!" he exclaimed, as he pointed to the broken ribs of the skeleton; "it must be so! The remains before me are none other than those of George Wills, whose story was related to me by one of the crew of the *Comus*, a week ago."

He turned away with a sigh, and once more consulting his compass, moved off in the direction of the ark.

The story of which he had spoken, may be told in a few words.

George Wills, a native of Nantucket, sailed from New Bedford in the whaler *Comus*, on the 18th of September, 18—. Being a strong, active young man, and an excellent sailor, he was soon promoted from a foremast hand to the position of harpooner in the mate's boat. In due course of time the vessel arrived upon the whaling grounds, in the Ochotsk Sea, where there was no lack of opportunities for the new boat-steerer to try his skill in wielding the barbed iron.

Much to his own satisfaction and that of the first officer, he proved as expert in this work as he was in handling the marlinespike and the oar.

One morning the four boats were got ready for one of those protracted whale-hunts so common in the Northwest. The crews were provided with a plentiful stock of provisions and fresh water, as they intended to remain absent from the ship for several days. George Wills being very partial to expeditions of this kind, was in excellent spirits. Little did he imagine the gloomy fate in store for him.

At five o'clock A. M., the boats were lowered; and after pulling about fifteen miles from the ship, the crews sighted whales in a large floe to leeward. The eight vessels were soon in the ice, and separating, each gave chase to a whale. Before long the mate's boat was within five fathoms of a huge bowhead.

"Stand up, Georgel!"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Give it to him!"

But before the harpooner could dart, he received a blow upon the breast from the whale's ponderous flukes, and fell over the gunwale—dead!

"Ay, ay, he's gone, sure enough—poor Wills!" exclaimed the mate, as the men dragged the body into the boat. "I don't know where I shall find another like him. There blows! there blows! right ahead of us! Put the body in the ice, men, and do it quickly, but gently. God have mercy on the poor fellow's soul! There blows! blows! blows! Lively with that body, lads, it's high time we were after that whale. We'll come back and pick up the corpse after we've captured that 'oil-butt!' Heaven pity Wills's poor old mother. Come, men, bear a hand there; one hundred barrels a-waiting for us to come and take 'em. Poor Wills—he's gone to that 'boom' from which no man returns. What d'ye say, men, are you ready?"

The men having by this time placed the body upon a shelf of ice, sprung into the boat and seized their paddles. The whale was overtaken and fastened to; but after it had towed the boat a long distance, the line became "foul" and the mate was obliged to cut. A thick fog having rising in the mean time, he was now unable to find the spot where the body of George Wills had been left. After pulling in many different directions for a number of hours, he gave up the search. On the next day, the fog having cleared, the search was continued, but without success. The body was never found by the crew of the *Comus*, and, as the reader already knows, it was only mere chance that directed the footsteps of Marline to the ice-tomb containing the fleshless remains. Leaving him to muse upon his way toward the ark, we will now return to Stump.

CHAPTER X.

AN UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER—CONCLUSION.

STARING at the deserted boat, with open mouth and distended eyes, the shipkeeper remained for a few moments as motionless as though he had been frozen to the ice beneath his feet. Then, in a voice tremulous with emotion, he shouted the young girl's name, again and

again; but there came no response. Nothing was to be heard save the surging of the water around the sides and in the hollows of the ice, together with the light pattering of the falling rain.

"God help the poor thing—God help her, wherever she may be!" groaned Stump. "It can't be possible that she became so anxious-like as to start off to look for her lover herself after I left her, or I would have met her. I shall never forgive myself for leaving her alone—no, never. There's something always happening to women—sickness or something else—and I ought to have remembered that and stuck close by her side."

He moved off, passing from berg to berg, and shouting the name of the lost girl as he proceeded. But he was soon obliged to sit down to compose himself, for he loved Alice with an affection fully equal to that which a kind father feels for an only daughter, and her prolonged absence inspired him with emotions of grief such as he had never before experienced.

"She isn't lost—no, no, it can't be!" he burst forth. "She is a good gal, and Providence watches over them kind. She is young, and yet I've never known her to laugh at my pigtail—not that there's anything about it to laugh at for that matter—like some of her sex that I've come across in my wanderings. Ay, ay, she's an angel, and God will take care of her."

At that moment he heard a shout which he recognized as that of his chum, and his response soon brought the young man to his side.

"Where is she? Where is Alice? She is not where we left her!"

"God only knows!" replied Stump. "I've been a-calling her and searching for her in vain ever since my return."

The young harpooner compressed his lips tightly. His head drooped and his tall frame trembled, so great was his agitation.

"Stump," he at length said, in a hoarse voice, "what *can* have become of her? My God! perhaps she has slipped into the water and been drowned!"

"No, no!" cried Stump, "that last couldn't happen. She is too careful for that, you may depend upon it. One of the boats couldn't have come and taken her away, neither."

"It is my opinion that all the boats are a long distance off by this time," replied Marline. "I didn't even succeed in finding the one I have been looking for, for the horn suddenly stopped blowing, and the blocks of ice have now become so closely wedged that no boat could have reached Alice soon enough to take her away before your return. No, no; she is on the ice, and if we look carefully for her, we may find her before night."

Then, with anxious faces and beating hearts, the two men moved away, threading the many intricate passages among the icy rocks with swift steps, peering into every cavern and hollow they encountered. But the crystal chambers were empty, and mockingly echoed back their voices, as they shouted the name of Alice.

They continued their search until the shadows of night put an end to their fruitless exertions; then, in the faint hope that the young girl might have returned to the ark during their absence,

they made their way to the point from which they had first started, by means of the pocket-compass in Harry's possession.

But the captain's niece had not come back, and the two men seated themselves beside the little retreat, both remaining silent for a long time under the influence of a feeling akin to despair. The harpooner was the first to speak:

"I can never know a moment's peace until Alice is found," said he, "for I cannot rid my mind of the idea that she is in some position in which she is suffering both mental and physical pain."

"We'll find her when the fog clears—ay, ay, we'll have her then, I'll warrant you," returned Stump, pressing the hand of his chum. "And now," he added, throwing open the side of the canvas roof, "you had better turn in and get a nap, while I remain up and keep a sort of a watch."

"No, no," responded the young man, "for I am confident that I could not sleep at present, and I doubt that I shall close my eyes throughout the whole night. If either of us sleeps, you must be the man to do so."

"I may do it, lad ay, ay, I may do so after awhile, which wouldn't be the case, how's'ever, if I wasn't confident that we'll find the gal in the morning. I'll even go further than that," added Stump, thrusting his arm into the boat and drawing forth the breaker of hard bread and the chunk of salt meat, which he had carefully wrapped in a piece of canvas. "I'll even go further and acknowledge that I am hopeful enough to feel hungry, and to believe that you'll help me eat some of our allowance."

Notwithstanding his boast, however, which in reality was but a *ruse* to cheer the drooping spirits of his companion, the shipkeeper, while bringing his teeth together with a clicking sound, and smacking his lips as though he were enjoying his meal with a keen relish, scarcely tasted a morsel. But a half-smothered sigh escaped him when he perceived that his well-meant trick failed to produce the intended effect; for Marline would not partake of the food. "Some other time," said he, "I'm not hungry now."

And Stump rolled up the provision again and dropped it into the boat, muttering rapidly to himself, in an undertone:

"That's the way with 'em—ay, ay, that's the way with them lovers the world over. They live on moonlight when they're together, and on grief when they are separated, and it's only when they find themselves a-dying for the want of nourishment, that they pitch into the provisions."

In order, however, to carry out the deception he had commenced, the shipkeeper now crawled into the boat, remarking that he should try a little nap after his meal.

Accordingly, he soon began to snore; but the noises that emanated from his nostrils, were so loud and peculiar—for in his anxiety to perform his part well, he went far beyond the limits prescribed by nature—that Marline, notwithstanding his anguish, could not fail to penetrate the *ruse*.

Not dreaming that such was the case, however, Stump continued to snore, while thoughts

something like the following passed through his mind:

"Ay, ay! I never tried to deceive anybody before—twist me if I did. But it's in a good cause, that it is, and there's no use for me to flinch now. Here's this poor lad a-worrying out his life about this gal, and I am tortured about it, too, though not exactly in the same way. But he *must* be cheered up; ay, that he must; and if snoring can do it—why, if that can do it, there's nothing more simple."

A peculiar noise, like that which might have been made by the rubbing of some person's hands against the outside surface of that portion of the tarred roof opposite to the position occupied by the harpooner, turned the reflections of the shipkeeper into another channel. His nose became silent, and raising himself upon his elbow, he listened eagerly, wondering who the author of the disturbance could be.

The scratching continued, and just as the shipkeeper was on the point of calling the attention of his chum to it, the edge of the tarred cloth, resting upon the gunwale, was pushed up, and Stump beheld a pair of fierce-looking eyes gleaming upon him through the gloom.

He drew quickly back, at the same time giving vent to a prolonged whistle of astonishment.

"Who is that?" he yelled, at length, in a voice so shrill and startling that Marline sprung to his feet. "Ay, blast you, who are you? Not the devil, surely, for that creatur' never comes to disturb honest men! Speak! you infernal ghou-eyed thing—speak, and tell me who or what you be!"

But before the sailor had concluded, the mysterious orbs disappeared, like two sparks of fire that are suddenly quenched.

"What is the matter, Stump?" inquired Harry, thrusting his head into the boat at the same moment.

His friend's explanation was short, but graphic.

"Perhaps your imagination deceived you," said the young man.

"Imagination! As true as my name is Stump, I haven't a bit of that article in me. The Stumps have all been matter-of fact, from generation to generation!"

Harry then proposed that an immediate search should be made for the mysterious creature, and followed by Stump, who had provided himself with a harpoon and the boat hatchet, he moved quickly forward. They had not gone far when they heard a low growl, which seemed to proceed from some one of the masses of ice directly ahead of them. They were also enabled to distinguish a pair of gleaming eyes bent fiercely upon them, and which Stump declared were the same he had seen peering into the boat.

"Quick—the harpoon!" whispered Marline, as a dark form, rapidly approaching them, now became visible—"It's a bear!"

The iron was soon in the young man's hand, and lifting it he darted it into the creature's side. The bear, however, came on, tossing his head, snapping his teeth and uttering ferocious growls; and before Marline had quite recovered his balance upon the slippery surface of the ice, the beast was so close to him that he could

feel its breath in his face; for the animal had by this time raised itself upon its hind-legs and drawn back its fore-paws preparatory to plunging its claws into the shoulders of the young man.

Stump, however, now rushed forward and buried the sharp edge of the boat hatchet deep in the animal's neck, when, with a snarl of agony and rage, Bruin turned upon his new adversary. Retreating backward, the latter continued to deal blow after blow upon the bear's neck, until the hatchet was knocked from his grasp by a stroke from the paw of his opponent.

Stump slipped at the same moment, falling upon his back, and the next instant the bear, which had paused for a few seconds, seemingly for the purpose of twisting its half severed head into its natural position, was about to throw itself upon upon the prostrate man, when Marline plunged his sheath-knife into the creature's stomach, drawing the edge—"Norwegian fashion"—along its belly, and ripping open the flesh.

The blood of the already weakened animal poured forth in a perfect torrent, and with a faint growl of defiance, the bear fell expiring upon the ice.

"Ay, ay," said Stump, as he regained his feet, and proceeded to smooth his ruffled pigtail, "he's a dead lubber, sure enough. I've heard stories before now about them creatur's up this way, not showing much fight, but twist me if I don't think this one is an exception, although he isn't much taller than a common-sized Newfoundland dog, and very lean at that."

"The animal was half-starved, as you can perceive by its appearance," replied Marline, "and that accounts for its ferocity. As a general thing a bear of this kind will run before an armed man."

"Ay, ay, this creatur' hasn't had anything to eat for a long time, I'll be bound, having got adrift, somehow, on the ice. It's a brown bear, I think, although it's so dark that it's hard to make out the color. My eyes! I never yet liked to meet an enemy in the dark!"

Marline did not reply, but with a pale and agitated countenance stood looking down upon the dead body at his feet.

"Hasn't it occurred to you, Stump," he said at length, "that this animal may have been the cause of the disappearance of—"

"Sure enough!" interrupted the shipkeeper, starting, "and singular it is that the idea didn't get into my head before. Depend upon it, that creatur' is at the bottom of the whole thing. But God help her!" he suddenly added, shuddering, "it can't be that—that—"

"I understand what you would say," broke forth from the harpooner; "but you may set your mind at ease upon that score. Alice has not been devoured by the bear, for if she had been the animal would not have attacked us so soon afterward."

"Ay, ay!" cried Stump, brightening up, "I didn't think of that. It's as you say—the bear didn't eat the poor gal. I ought to have known it by his being so lean, for he couldn't o' swallowed such a plump lass as she is without showing it. No—no. She saw the ravenous creatur' and she's gone and hid herself somewhere and is

afraid to come out. We'll find her in the morning, lad, depend upon it."

The two men made their way back to the block of ice upon which the ark was situated, where they remained, sleepless and watchful, until the gray dawn began to creep into the mist. Then they moved off to continue the search. But they had not gone far when Stump suddenly uttered a loud cry, while his eyes—fixed upon some particular point—gleamed with a peculiar expression.

"What is it? What do you see?" cried Marline.

"It's gone now!" cried Stump; "it's gone, sure enough; and more's the wonder. It's a miracle—a perfect miracle; for my eyes didn't deceive me; I'm sure of that!"

"For God's sake, tell me; what was it?"

"It was that little golden harpoon—the gift that the captain gave to Miss Alice!"

"What? How?—the harpoon? You must have been deceived. Where did you see it?"

"Where that lump of ice right ahead of us rises up. The harpoon was on top of it. I saw the shine of the gold—I'm sure of it! But it was only for a moment, for the thing disappeared all of a sudden—faded away from my sight."

"Impossible! Have your senses left you, Stump?"

"Not a bit of it, lad. I saw the harpoon as plainly as I see you!"

"Are you positive upon—"

"Ay, ay; ready to swear to it," interrupted the other, resorting to his pigtail.

The harpooner darted to the projection of ice to which the shipkeeper had alluded, and eagerly scanned every nook and crevice around it, for the idea had occurred to him that the harpoon, owing to some imperceptible motion of the berg, might have been dislodged from its position.

But the golden bauble was not found.

"It's perfectly wonderful," cried Stump. "Here was the harpoon, right plump and plain, a minute ago, and now it's gone. Well, well, them that says the days of miracles is past must be infarnal liars, and—"

He paused suddenly, and, fairly trembling with excitement, touched the arm of his companion.

"There—there it is, lad, again, sure enough. There, where that small mass of ice sticks out like a knot from one side of the berg, right ahead of us."

"I see it!" cried Harry, darting forward, and, in a few moments, he would have seized it, had not the little bauble suddenly and mysteriously disappeared from his view.

He carefully scanned the projecting mass of ice, but he saw nothing to explain the singular phenomenon that had just occurred.

"It's a queer bit of gold—my eyes, if it isn't," cried Stump, "to run away from its friends in that style, seeing that it isn't through miserliness that we are after it. There's a miracle about it, sure enough."

As the shipkeeper concluded, he chanced to direct his eyes toward a hole in that part of the ice near his feet, and then beheld two little twinkling orbs looking up at him from the cavity. He started back with a cry of surprise, but, the next moment, he condemned himself for this unnecessary display of emotion.

"To think that I should be startled by a seal a-looking up at me from his hole," he exclaimed, as the inquiring eyes of Marline were bent upon his face; "for that was all, lad. I'm ashamed to own it—that was what made me cry out."

He stamped upon the ice impatiently as he spoke, and probably alarmed by the noise thus made, the seal crawled from the cavity, and dove into a narrow channel of water that extended along the base of the berg; but, before it had accomplished this feat, the two men, to their surprise and unbounded joy, had caught sight of the golden harpoon, which was suspended to the neck of the little creature by means of a strip of blue ribbon!

"Ay, ay; I told you so," exclaimed Stump, gleefully rubbing his hands. "The gal is still alive; for who but herself could have tied that bit of gold to the neck of the seal?"

"Certainly!" responded Marline, with gleaming eyes; "and, without doubt, we can find the whereabouts of Alice by closely tracking this creature, which will probably go to the point from which it first started. It has been hurt by a blow from a boat-hook, or some other implement. I know that by the way it moved."

"And that's why it takes to the water," replied his companion; "for the creatur' knows that salts is good for its wound, and it's only by cruising along the edge of the channel that we'll sight it again."

Accordingly, the two men, with their gaze still resting upon the narrow strip of water, proceeded along its icy shore. They had not gone far when they saw the seal lying motionless upon a small berg, a few feet ahead of them.

But it moved slowly away as they advanced—so slowly, in fact, that they were obliged to slacken their pace in order not to alarm the timid animal. In this manner they followed it for a full half-hour, at the end of which time the creature glided toward a hole near the base of a berg—one which, as it was near the eastern edge of the floe, had not hitherto been encountered by the men during their search.

"Ay, ay!" cried Stump, "there it goes, sure enough, into the hole, and—and—my eyes!" he suddenly interrupted, "it's only got half-way in, after all, for the p'int of the harpoon has caught in a crevice, and holds the little lubber fast."

He darted forward, as he concluded, seized the struggling animal, and, disengaging the bauble from its neck, passed it to Marline. At the same moment, a musical voice was heard to emerge from beneath the thick ice-walls of the berg:

"Is that you, my friend? Heaven be praised!"

Both men uttered a simultaneous shout of joy.

"It is she—it is Alice!" cried Marline, bounding forward. "Thank God! she is found at last!"

"Ay, ay!" retorted the shipkeeper, clapping his hands, and dancing around the frozen mass, like a wild islander, "I felt pretty sartain that blessed creatur' would lead us the right way! We are here, Miss Alice—both of us!" he added, raising his voice; "so keep up a good heart, till we get you out, which we'll do in the tying of a square knot!"

In fact, Harry had already begun to ascend one of the sides of the crystal pile, and soon af-

terward, as the berg was not very high, he had gained the summit. Here he found an aperture, which was barely large enough to admit a human body, and which led into one of those small, curiously-formed cells, which are found among the many crystal wonders fashioned by Nature's hand.

And, in this narrow chamber, the sides of which were too smooth to enable her to climb them, stood the niece of Captain Howard, looking up at her lover, as he peered through the opening, which was not more than five feet above her head.

By means of the "ratlin-cords," in Stump's possession, the young girl was soon extricated from her uncomfortable quarters. Then, under the natural impulse of the moment, Marline clasped her to his breast, while she, with a glad but faint cry, pillowed her weary head upon his breast.

"My own Alice, found at last!"

"Harry—dear Harry! Thank Heaven! we meet again!"

"Ay, ay!" cried Stump; "so you do; and it does my heart good to see it. It was that pretty idee of yours—that of fastening the harpoon to the seal—that brought it about. But I think we'd better get back to your 'hotel,' as soon as we can, seeing as you'll be more comfortable there than you are here. The fog," he added, glancing around him, "will soon clear before the northerly breeze, which has been fresh'ning since midnight; and, if I ain't mistaken, we'll see some of the boats when that happens."

Accordingly, the little party moved off in the direction of the ark, and, as they proceeded, Alice explained to her two friends the cause of her disappearance. Soon after Stump had quit- ted her to search for Marline, she heard a low growl, at no great distance from the spot she occupied, and at the same moment, she beheld a ferocious-looking bear moving toward her. Obeying the impulse of the moment, she turned and fled, the animal pursuing her, and it was not until she found herself near the eastern edge of the floe, that she ventured to look behind her. There was, however, within reach of her hand, a curiously-shaped iceberg, and the thought now occurred to her that, if she could gain the summit, the bear would not be able to follow her up the slippery ascent. Accordingly, with the strength and activity of desperation, she scaled the glittering mass, in the top of which she found the opening already alluded to, and through which, in an unguarded movement, she was precipitated into the cell or cavity beneath. She heard the savage growls of rage from her pursuer without, as the beast, with rapid but clumsy movements, vainly endeavored to clamber the slippery sides of the berg; and, finally, the sound of the retreating footsteps of the baffled animal saluted her ears. Not long afterward she distinguished the far-off voices of Stump and Marline, who by this time had commenced to search for her. She responded, as loudly as she could, but the thickness of the ice-walls prevented her voice from reaching the two sailors—a fact of which she was convinced by the receding of the shouts. They became fainter every moment, and, with a weary sigh, she had crouched in a corner of her

cell, when her glance alighted upon the form of a seal, as it emerged from a small hole opposite to her. Then the happy thought of fastening the golden harpoon to the creature's neck flashed upon her mind. Her friends, she thought, would certainly see the little traveler, during its wanderings about the floe, and would finally track the animal to its retreat, to which, prompted by instinct, it would probably return before many hours. Be this as it might, however, the novelty of the idea pleased her, and so, creeping cautiously toward the seal, which, owing to the wound it had received, was not very active, she finally succeeded in grasping it and in securing the golden bauble to its neck by the strip of blue ribbon which was taken from her hair. Then she released the little prisoner, and was pleased to see it crawl away from her and disappear through its hole. The reader knows the rest.

By the time the young girl concluded her story, the fog had cleared sufficiently to enable the party to see for half a league across the watery expanse stretching away to the south.

The faint booming of a gun was now heard in that direction, and it was followed by a joyful exclamation of Stump. With a loud cheer he tossed his sou'wester into the air.

"That gun is from the ship!" he exclaimed, "it is that lubberly six-pounder that she carries, forward. I can't mistake the sound."

He was right; but an hour elapsed before enough of the fog had lifted to enable the spectator to see the vessel, which was nearly a league to the south'ard, heading directly for the floe. The shipkeeper seized an oar, and fastening a piece of canvas to it, waved it about his head. Ere long the signal was answered by that of the Montpelier, which was "run up" to the truck, and when the vessel had approached within a mile of the floe her maintopsail was "backed"; then a boat was lowered. It soon struck the ice, and Alice was received in her uncle's arms; while Mr. Briggs advanced and shook hands with his harpooner.

Explanations followed, and while the captain's niece was relating her story to her uncle, Mr. Briggs proceeded to give Marline an account of the adventures of himself and his companions after they had parted from the young men on the floe.

"It was not until we had wandered about for some time," said he, "that we succeeded in sighting one of the boats—that of the second mate. We shouted to him; he picked us up, and I then told him that I left you alone upon the ice to take charge of my stove boat, and that we must contrive to work his craft to the spot where you were, so that we could pick you up. By this time, how's'ever, the blocks and bergs had become so closely jammed together, that none of us could see how we were a-going to do what I proposed. But, as I insisted we went to work, and after three hours of the hardest kind of work we'd got so far among the bergs that we didn't think we could ever get out again, and all without seeing or hearing anything of you, I came to the conclusion that my craft had got sunk, and that you'd been picked up by one of the other boats; and so I said to Spooner, that we'd better be for getting out of

our ticklish quarters if he didn't want his boat to get stove."

"Ay, ay," here interposed Stump, "and there's sart'inly a moral in that part of your story, seeing as it shows how difficulties always makes us perfectly willing to believe that it's best to do what we're most inclined to do, a-leaving our duty entirely out of the consideration."

As the shipkeeper was a sort of privileged character, the mate took no notice of his remark beyond a slight frown. Then again turning to Marline, he continued:

"It took us as long, if not longer, to get out of the ice than to get in, but, we got clear at last, and Spooner had just given orders to the men to take to their oars—for he intended to make for the shore—when suddenly we heard, ahead of us, a sound like the rushing of a ship through the water. The crew were then made to stop pulling, and we were a-sitting with our oars apeak, when, my eyes! what should come looming out of the fog, and making straight for us, but the Montpelier itself!"

And Briggs then went on to describe those incidents concerning the chase—the death of Tom Block—the final recapture of the ship by Captain Howard—and, lastly, the loss of the two boats; all of which are already familiar to the reader.

"All that we could do after the loss of our boats," continued the narrator, "was to wait for a breeze, which as you know, didn't spring up until midnight. Then we headed for the floe, as you can perceive, and were fortunate enough, soon afterward, to pick up the third mate, whose boat it is you see alongside of us. You know the rest, lads, and so that ends the story."

We have but little more to add.

The whole party returned to the Montpelier, in which, after she had partaken of refreshments, and enjoyed the luxury of sleep, Alice recovered her youthful spirits, together with the bloom that had in a measure, been banished by the hardships she had suffered.

A week from that time the vessel left the sea of Ochotsk, homeward bound. She arrived at her destined port in a few months, and the trial of all the mutineers—with the exception of the Portuguese steward (who shortly after his desertion from the Montpelier, had been picked up by the whaler, Comus, only to be lost overboard shortly afterward during a heavy gale of wind)—was then commenced.

Tom Lark and Driko were sentenced to be hung; the rest to be imprisoned for life.

Alice Howard and Harry Marline were married before a select party of friends—among whom was Stump, with his pigtail beautifully oiled for the occasion—at the house of the bride's uncle. They are now living, contented and happy, in a pleasant cottage on the outskirts of New Bedford.

Stump, who still follows a seafaring life, comes to see them, once in a while, and on every such occasion, as may well be imagined, he receives a hearty welcome, not only from Alice and her husband, but also from two other Marlines—two little pocket editions with chubby faces and fat hands, who talk so much of "Uncle Stump."

THE END.

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